

Art Basel Conversations | Wednesday, June 4, 2008 | 10–11.30h |
Hall 1, Messe Schweiz

TRANSCRIPT | **ARTIST TALK**

SPEAKERS | **LAWRENCE WEINER**

Artist; New York, USA

JORGE PARDO

Artist; Los Angeles, USA

Welcome | **Sylvia Chivaratanon**

Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining us for our first Conversation here at Art Basel. This morning we have two artists, Jorge Pardo, based in Los Angeles and Lawrence Weiner, based in New York. And they will have a conversation for about 30 minutes and then you'll be free to ask them any questions if you like. Help me welcome Lawrence and Jorge.

In conversation | **Lawrence Weiner** with **Jorge Pardo**

Lawrence Weiner: I feel this is a strange interruption. It's ten o'clock in the morning and I have no idea why we all are sitting here. But let's go. So, why are you here?

Jorge Pardo: I am here because they said you'd be here.

Lawrence Weiner: I am here because Cay Sophie said you'd be here! No, I came to screen a film. I just screened last night.

Jorge Pardo: And I came here to speak with you and to speak with another person. And to spend some time with my family in Europe and I have a couple of little things to do here and there ... We haven't really discussed about what to talk about. Maybe we should talk about how we're having a hard time finding something to talk about?

Lawrence Weiner: I think the big problem is that one finds oneself in these situations where the obvious conversation is one that in fact – other than the practical of survival – is of no general interest to artists which is this market and other things. You have very little to do with it surprisingly. It has no morality in itself. It's not immoral. It's completely amoral. How to break out of that pattern and take the advantage of having two working artists be able to discuss essentially why the hell you wake up in the morning and why you make art?

Jorge Pardo: I don't know. Why do you get up in the morning and make art?

Lawrence Weiner: It's a strange thing and I was talking to my daughter about it. I honestly started making art basically out of trying to politically change the environment that I was growing up in and the situation and the culture I was in. I was kvetching the other day to somebody about being

tired because I just had a retrospective and they said “Oh but you reached the stage in your life where you can just sort of like step back.” And I thought about this and it never encouraged me. I realized what an idiotic thing for somebody to say. To take an artist and put him in that place. You wake up every morning in the hope that something you’re going to be doing and placing in the world, is going change this world in a little tiny bit closer towards what you see as a certain normal relationship between human beings and objects and between human beings and human beings. And when it changes, how the hell are you going to sort of just stand still? What are you supposed to do then? Become sort of an object that represents something – icon or whatever you call it – or do you reengage? You, yourself were part of the world that had changed. And that’s the basic question. So that’s what I do in the morning.

But this morning was a hard one. I must say. I screened the film last night and I had a very nice time at a party... well, ten o’clock in the morning, to be talking about art is something else.

Jorge Pardo: I get up in the morning and I’m just happy to have a job. I grew up in a kind of post idealistic condition in that sense, because my parents were kind of poor people in Cuba in the fifties. Then the revolution hit and they supported Castro and nothing happened and then they lost their ability and we ended up in the Midwest, completely displaced, surrounded by a bunch of very strange Americans. And I think a big part of what I do is about trying to adjust to that.

I can’t tell you how or why, but I remember being in college and being bored obviously as a lot of people of that age and getting involved with art... it seemed like people there would talk about other things than in other parts of the university. So I sort of gravitated towards that and I was just continually trying to invent myself in some way that was interesting every day.

I’m not necessarily political in that sense. I think I’m not sure that art changes the world in a way that one can quantify or something like that.

Lawrence Weiner: But I honestly think it does. Because I think it produces logic patterns of the way that the people deal with and respond to their relationships with objects and their relationships with cultural objects as well. And in doing that, in changing a logic pattern, and at least not forcing it on anybody but presenting it in such a way that ... That’s why in the last two retrospectives there’s no signage, no explanations – people are not stupid. It’s my great joy in an exhibition to be standing quietly at the corner and nobody knows who you are. And somebody is looking at something and you see the doubt in their mind. And then fifteen minutes later they walk through and you see somebody just say “Oh, I get it!” And the “I get it” is what you want. That’s why you put it out to the world.

I have a personal question for you. When you decided that you are going to attempt to be an artist, what did your cultural situation, your background, your parents say? What did they say to you? I am very serious.

Jorge Pardo: They didn’t say much. My parents were pretty much not agitated. They were just happy that they didn’t have to support me, because they didn’t have the money to do it. But you know, I grew up in such a kind of discombobulated sort of relationship to my parents and my own development that ... I think my parents would have been very happy if I would have just continued to work in the same factories they worked at. Because it was in the seventies and there was a certain stability in that.

Getting involved in art was a way for me to sort of hide from that to a certain degree. Or kind of make my own place that I can sort of, you know, derive a different type of logic. But you know, my parents didn’t really understand what I was doing, they weren’t particularly interested, they weren’t particularly disinterested. You know, it was very clear that my motions were very different than theirs. I wasn’t in jail and I wasn’t taking their money.

Lawrence Weiner: James Turrell has reminded me I was in jail, but it was the fifties and it was about civil rights. My parents were working class and not terribly successful, but they thought that everybody was being nice to me and they were even getting me out of jail. They thought I was going to be a philosophy teacher. And when I did say it to my mother, I must have been about fifteen and a half, sixteen, and I was moving out of the house. I fell in love with this woman or something ... And she looked at me and said, "Lawrence, you can't do that." And I said, "What do you mean - I can't do that?" She said, "You'll break your heart." And I said, "Why?" And she said, "Art is for women and rich people." And I guess in her eyes I didn't qualify either way.

Jorge Pardo: She was right!

Lawrence Weiner: No, serious! But that's the difference of the culture between the fifties and the seventies.

Jorge Pardo: Yes. I have a question for you. You are an American artist, but you sort of lived outside of America for many, many years. What is it like?

Lawrence Weiner: I didn't really. That seems to be fiction. Genuinely it is fiction. I am a New Yorker. Born and raised in New York, I went to public school and the whole thing.

Jorge Pardo: But didn't you stay in Holland for many years?

Lawrence Weiner: I still do. I had been lucky enough to be in all those exhibitions ... in Bern - the "attitude ..." - show -, in Amsterdam ... I was traveling a bit and we had no money and so I would basically go on the road and come back with some money. And then when Alice and I decided to have a child I made this decision. I sort of liked the person I was living with and I liked to spend a little time as well with my kid before you reach

that age when they are plugged into school and that's it. We wanted her to grow up with one foot in the old world and one foot in the new world. But in fact I always kept a place in New York - the same place on Bleeker Street and then afterwards the same place on Fourth Street. Yes, I traveled a lot when I was like seventeen. I had my first show in California when I was eighteen. But things were a little different. My great mentor in San Francisco was John Altoon. You know, seventeen and a half, people were a little more generous ...

Jorge Pardo: Did you study in the West coast?

Lawrence Weiner: I never went to art school.

Jorge Pardo: So how did you get involved with John Altoon?

Lawrence Weiner: I think I was sitting in Vesuvio's and having a conversation with somebody. He was one of the people I was having a conversation with. The same was in New York: You used to get involved with people by talking at the bar.

Jorge Pardo: Is it true you're a boxer?

Lawrence Weiner: Yes, but I wasn't a very good one. I got in a lot of trouble with the police in New York City and one of those things in those days in the fifties was that you could be sent off - but I was a minor. I was this problematic person. I was doing things that you had to be twenty-one to do, but I was seventeen. And they said if I would box in the Golden Gloves for them I wouldn't have to go to reformatory.

So I guess they would stand there and watch me every two weeks get the shit beat out of me. They liked it, you know. It was good practice for becoming an artist. I am serious! You know who was a semi-professional boxer; Doug Huebler! And Sandro Chia was a professional boxer!

Jorge Pardo: He doesn't look like a boxer, Sandro Chia.

Lawrence Weiner: He was a real boxer. Jonathan Ellery is still a rugby player. I played rugby for the Irish, for money. In the days when I was growing up essentially, I was not – and I am still not – very interested in sports but it was a way to make a living.

Jorge Pardo: What does your sister do?

Lawrence Weiner: My sister ... Oh my sister is a very interesting person. I have very little contact. I was out of the house actually, when she was growing up. We got stuck about how to take care of our parents and ... So I just left. I'd send money whether I had it or not. But she stayed for a while and I think then she registered at the Sorbonne in Paris and went there and then ended up working in Argentina. I think she worked for the Conference Board until she discovered that it was quite right wing and then she worked for Kennecott Copper which was pretty funny. And then she was a respiratory therapist at Johns Hopkins – You asked! She is quite bright, so they were paying for her for continuing. She already had her masters from City College in journalism or something and she didn't study medicine. She went and she got a law degree. She became a lawyer, but a hospital lawyer. And now she's working for a university, arranging conferences.

How is that? I don't think she'd be embarrassed about by my talking about it. She has had this funny life, I guess.

Jorge Pardo: Does anybody have any questions?

Lawrence Weiner: This is really very strange. One could make a polemic speech and Jorge has his polemics and I have my polemics. I think, it might be an interesting idea, to open it up. There is a microphone that floats around ...

Audience: Why did they put you on a panel together? Isn't your work very different?

Lawrence Weiner: In fact it's not.

Jorge Pardo: I don't think it is as different as it looks.

Lawrence Weiner: What do you think?

Jorge Pardo: I think it's a work that lives and dies by its context, how it's placed in the world and by its relationships. How to enter and be in the world is something that is dramatically important to what it is.

Lawrence Weiner: I agree with that.

Jorge Pardo: You know, the formalities are dramatically different in the sense that you use language and I use materials. But I think that I feel probably very comfortable with this idea that the way that the work actually unfolds as a work, is that there is space for people to get lost in it and kind of come back and kind of find it. To me that's a very important dynamic in the work. It somehow supersedes a kind of a conventional frame. Maybe it is as important when you leave, as it is when you are there ... Those kinds of issues. I don't know. What do you think?

Lawrence Weiner: Wouldn't you say that – if you thought about the praxis – the work only exists when it goes into the world? It can never be an ivory tower. There is no conceivable way that an artist like Jorge Pardo or an artist like myself would be in an ivory tower. Lost in space, and 30 years later somebody will discover you and you will have this revelatory exhibition.

The work functions because it's in an interactive conversation with other artists and with the real other world. I see artists as part of the real world. I know I've said it before, but we pay our taxes, we take our kids to the dentist. I don't know where the difference between public and so-called artists is. I am public. Public art that I make is for me. Public art that you make is for you. You even live in it! I don't know how many people know that for an exhibition Jorge built a house and lived in it.

Jorge Pardo: You are right. It's not a distinction from an institution, it's the world. It is an institution, but a very different institution. I think that for me the works of mine that work the best, are the ones that actually people who don't necessarily have a kind of a cultural relationship to looking at culture can take something away from. Maybe what they take away isn't necessarily what I'm thinking about. There is a sort of ability to put material out there in the world that can operate in the same way everything else does.

Lawrence Weiner: But then you are disagreeing to what you just said earlier. That you don't think that art changes the world very much.

Jorge Pardo: I think it does. On some level it does dramatically, but in terms of... You know historically, when one thinks of art as being transformative – really kind of politically transformative – that's way too ambitious for me to feel comfortable. I think there are little things that people do. But maybe I agree more with you than I actually think.

Lawrence Weiner: I think that's an old-fashioned idea. I think that's what people lay on you. That if you are thinking about changing the world you must be egocentric or you must think that you are more powerful than you are.

No, you change a little bit. But you are not going to be able to notice the change, because while you are changing things, the world is turning itself. The world changes. And in changing that, it reactivates the dialog. It means that essentially if you can change the logic pattern of the relationship of a piece of steel and a piece of stone, the next morning you are in another world. That steel and that stone don't know that they're not supposed to have changed.

I was tired this morning and I'm getting old. With this being on the road all the time you begin to question and yet the only thing that makes you deal with it is that maybe the show you made, maybe somebody did get it. And maybe some-

where it stuck as residue on them and that has changed their relationship to that table. It sounds a little corny, but it's the truth. And then maybe you are obligated to continue. To carry on a conversation. Because you were one of the people, the whole point of the fucking operation was to change the relationship with that table; now you've changed it – You'd better figure out what it is and have another conversation with somebody.

Conversations for artists are not about talking about themselves. I mean it's also nice for Jorge and I talking, because we both come from working class backgrounds at different times, and in the art world at this moment we are the rarities, but the point is still the table, and everything sitting on that table. Art is the stuff that floats on top of the table. It hasn't found a place yet; it hasn't found what it's supposed to do. And once it does, it's just art history.

Jorge Pardo: One of the things that I really liked about things that weren't art – and now I think everything is art, anything can be art – is that there was a kind of way you could assume the experiences with things were just in the world were really kind of metered by what was in your head. And not necessarily what was sort of around it. And for me that's very important – how do you set up a kind of a condition so that you can sort of have an imaginary relationship to how something becomes meaningful, or not, or weird or strange or the same? How do you set up a kind of world whether it is in my studio, or in my head or in these installations? Whenever they really work well, there is a kind of productive sense of being dumbfounded or estranged.

I mean this idea of defamiliarization which goes back to the Russians, this is something that I am very attached to. That you kind of make things strange. And that's my job in a way. It could be obviously the way you sort of produce forms of estrangement that can get more or less complicated depending on what you're trying to work with.

Lawrence Weiner: But “strange” is a funny word, isn’t it?

Jorge Pardo: It’s a good word.

Lawrence Weiner: I guess. I don’t know. You know, I’m always fighting against this idea of parallel realities. There is no parallel reality. Because then you have a hierarchy, one is the reflection of the other.

And we have been empowered all of our live by chaos theory. I was studying this and it was really entering into the system. Chaos theory is fabulous. Touch it and it will never be the same – it empowers human beings. The problem with chaos theory is that it makes you the center of the universe. And you have to stand there and you have to ask the question: “Is Galileo right or is Galileo wrong?” And that maybe is the job of an artist. Those are the people who are willing to try to determine if Galileo was right or if Galileo was wrong.

Chaos theory really just not gives you this concept of simultaneous reality. It places you into another situation. But simultaneous reality, where everything is happening at the same time at the same point and has the same value – that’s making art.

Jorge Pardo: I like that. It’s sloppy.

Lawrence Weiner: I don’t know if it’s sloppy. It’s a little stuffed. Because if everything happening at the same point at the same time in the same place it gets – in our mind, the way we see it – quite crowded.

Jorge Pardo: Yes. Then it’s a question of ... like if you are interested in sort of getting at something. The things you have to get out of the way are as important as the things you’re trying to get at. If you are sort of a conscious person ...

Lawrence Weiner: I always leave them all there ... which is the idea of rectifying material, which is

the other reason why I use language. Then you have a stone and we basically know what a stone is. So all the baggage that comes with the stone stays with the stone. Nobody has to pare it away.

Jorge Pardo: I would agree with that. How much time do we have?

Lawrence Weiner: Oh, we have still a lot of time.

Jorge Pardo: What are you reading these days?

Lawrence Weiner: Mmmm, what am I reading?

Jorge Pardo: I don’t read.

Lawrence Weiner: Oh, I read. But, Jorge, reading becomes the strangest thing in the world. If you are working a lot and I’ve been working a lot on these shows, you try to keep up with what’s going on in newspapers and in journals and things. But reading ... you have to give up a lot. You have to decide basically to have delayed sex or something else – because there is no time! But I try to read on the airplane. I’m one of those eclectic people. I buy books by their cover.

Jorge Pardo: I don’t read. I fly.

Lawrence Weiner: You fly.

Jorge Pardo: I got my pilot’s license about three years ago.

Lawrence Weiner: You got a pilot’s license? Wow!

Jorge Pardo: Yes. That’s pretty much all I do now. I read the airplane magazines and that drives my wife nuts.

Lawrence Weiner: What kind of planes though?

Jorge Pardo: Just little propeller planes. They are a lot of fun though.

Lawrence Weiner: I imagine. I don't have one to drive, so I'm totally impressed. One woman picked me up this morning in the hotel ... I was astonished – quite attractive. I was really just impressed that she could drive.

Jorge Pardo: It's a curious thing to do actually.

Lawrence Weiner: Where do you fly to and from?

Jorge Pardo: You know, in the beginning you kind of fly to stupid places. Because you try to figure out how to do it. And then after a while you start to go to places you actually want to go to.

Lawrence Weiner: Does it affect the work that you're doing? Because it really affected James Turrell.

Jorge Pardo: You know, we actually flew to visit James about a year ago. We, Veronica and I, took a little plane, it was a lot of fun. I went to "Spiral Jetty" like six months ago. Just plugged in a GPS, got there, walked around a few times and came back home. You do stuff like that, stupid stuff, fun stuff.

I couldn't tell you "Oh, flying is making my work different." Or something like that. I wouldn't know how to say that. I never had a hobby before. This feels like a proper hobby. And I didn't realize that hobbies are quite important. I never quite understood that.

Lawrence Weiner: I still don't. So convince me. Maybe the whole point of this operation is to convince me to have a hobby.

Jorge Pardo: See, you are much more easy-going than I am. I am probably more anxious than you are. So hobbies are nice places to do something else. It is not anything. It is just something else.

Lawrence Weiner: Okay.

Jorge Pardo: There is a lady who has got a question.

Lawrence Weiner: Oh, that's fantastic!

Audience: Could you tell something about the film that premiered yesterday?

Lawrence Weiner: It sort of speaks for itself. And I don't mean that in a pretentious manner. It was an attempt to deal with this question of specific and general realities. And it came about from a conversation with Noritoshi who I just saw wandering around, and this people and Gianni Jetzer from the Swiss Institute.

In 1976 there was quite a bit of heavy censorship in the United States. And it was getting quite dangerous. And they had asked since I've been making movies if I would make a hardcore pornographic movie. They would show it at the kitchen and if the government went up against it, we would fight it. As a way to fighting censorship. I don't know whether it had anything to do with it but they pulled back after a while and they never went against us and we've showed it over and over publicly and it's still floats around. It turned out to be a rather interesting video.

30 years down the line, somebody came and asked me since they are starting censorship quite heavily in the United States again – to the point that the New York Times writing editorials saying that somebody better start doing something because it is going faster and faster and eroding. In Europe as well, it's beginning to erode. It's beginning to become that certain people are having the rights to tell other people what means to find their own place in the sun. And they asked if I would do it and I guess I said, "Yes". And we went about putting together this tape and we screened it last night.

It's available from the Swiss Institute on a DVD at a reasonable price: I figured if three people decided to drink beer instead of Whisky one night when they went out, they could really afford 150 Swiss Francs to go and buy the DVD and they could watch it together. I am very pleased with it. It was a good experience. The crew and the cast they were all amateurs, they were all people from our own

world from the art world. They worked well. It is rather pretty. The camera person was extremely good.

But there is nothing to say about a movie. You make the movie for people to see it. It's like I never understand signage in a museum explaining an exhibition. I mean, the exhibition explains itself. And if it doesn't, then something went wrong.

Jorge Pardo: Was it different for you, I mean, pornography was very different in the seventies in the United States than it is now. The industry was less regulated I would imagine and had less sort of places to disseminate privately and things like that.

Lawrence Weiner: I guess. I have no idea. 30 years ago it was the last time I made one ...

Jorge Pardo: It wasn't even pornographic in that sense ...

Lawrence Weiner: It was pornographic.

Jorge Pardo: I know, but you know what I mean. It was a pornographic film that was designed for a kind of transcendental context.

Lawrence Weiner: That yes. But this one has its own content. You'll see it when you see it. You came in too late last night. You should have come from the airplane and go straight to the theater.

Jorge Pardo: You made a film with a lady in a staircase. Is that true?

Lawrence Weiner: What?

Jorge Pardo: Did you ever make a film with a lady in an escalator?

Lawrence Weiner: No. That's Sarah Morris, isn't it?

Jorge Pardo: No, no, it's different. I heard about this in the early eighties.

Lawrence Weiner: Oh, this was a film with somebody going up and down a ladder.

Jorge Pardo: There you go – a ladder!

Lawrence Weiner: My daughter was going up and down a ladder. That was just an integral part of a film about agoraphobia, about a woman who didn't want to go outside and wouldn't take her kid to the zoo. This I mean unmetaphorical. You see, I personally have a problem with metaphor. You often play with metaphor.

Jorge Pardo: I like metaphor.

Lawrence Weiner: I know. Maybe this is why they put us together! Jorge is capable of working with metaphor and I find myself trying to spend my entire life avoiding metaphor. I think the thing itself is exactly what it is. So we answered your question finally.

Jorge Pardo: I am not sure.

Lawrence Weiner: Metaphor has one problem for me: You have to accept the value structure of the culture that is giving you the metaphor. Maybe because I'm a New Yorker, I don't accept the value structure of the place I am comfortably living in.

Jorge Pardo: Yes, but there is also a transient. You know, values are constantly shifting, generational et cetera.

Lawrence Weiner: I don't think it's generational. I am repeating myself. But there are no generations. If everybody is standing on a corner – if the kid is there, my kid is there, and an old person is there, I am an old person, and a younger person is there, and you get across the street and the tram didn't run you down, you are all in exactly the same generation.

Jorge Pardo: But I tell you, there are differences between being six years old in 1972 and being six years old in 2008. The realities are different. I mean, maybe it's the same one in terms of ... when I use the word generation I mean it literally, it's very literal. It is really about ...

Lawrence Weiner: ... place and time.

Jorge Pardo: Yes, place and time. And these things make it dramatically different. Things we believe in or not or whatever. That is one of the things I am very interested in: How things unravel and how impossible it is to think about history with those problems.

Lawrence Weiner: This whole concept of metaphors is a problematic one.

Jorge Pardo: It has become less problematic I think, for me. Because I think it's something I feel like you walk through.

Lawrence Weiner: Where do you get to if you walk through it?

Jorge Pardo: Well, let's take the house project for instance. There are obvious metaphors in that project. Everything from domesticity to the history of this country with this kind of idea, "An American is not an American without a house". Since the beginning of the country it was about land and making a home and all that stuff. But the reality of it is that the project begins with that type of metaphor. Or many metaphors. They sort of start to unravel through the way you experience what the place is and isn't.

Lawrence Weiner: I think the house project is ... it keeps the rain off your head. And I guess my working with water sometimes is to try to reconcile people that it's not so bad being wet.

It gets back to a conversation that was in a magazine with Jean Nouvel about what primitive is. There is a group of people sitting on the ground

and it is raining, but they are laughing and they are eating and they can still get their night sleep and they are reasonably happy. And there is someone sitting in a luxury apartment taking more pills than are quite necessary to get through the day. Who is primitive?

Jorge Pardo: Whoever you want to call primitive.

Lawrence Weiner: Yes, this is the problem. I'm trying to figure out what the concept of the primitive is.

Jorge Pardo: Does this feel primitive?

Lawrence Weiner: No, I am crude.

Jorge Pardo: No, I mean ...

Lawrence Weiner: I have no idea what this is, I must say. I really don't. I have no opinions about an art fair. I always thought it was great. I always liked commercial galleries since I was a kid – much more than I liked museums. And I really dislike alternative spaces. Galleries – people walk in off the street, you put your wares up, art is for use and if somebody thinks it is awful, they laugh and they walk out, there is no guilt. And if somebody really understands that it has a value, that there is something there that is useful, they attempt to purchase it. In museums they always have the feeling that they missed something if they didn't know what to do with it. And my job is not to make feel people less, it is to make people feel that maybe they do have a handle on what the world is about. And that handle comes from the making of art.

I can't stand people going like this. Build a structure that sets up an alternative structure that sets up a way that they can think differently. And then, if they don't accept it, then you can reject them. But you basically have to lay it out first. And give them an opportunity to adapt to what they are trying to do.

Question: This is a strange situation as you said. But to me it is interesting to listen to you talking together. And my question would be: How is it for artists to be here at Art Basel? Are you put under pressure by your gallery owners, or do you like to be here? That's a question that came up while sitting here.

Jorge Pardo: Do the galleries think it is good for us to be here?

Lawrence Weiner: What is their thought of you being here?

Jorge Pardo: You know my wife Veronica, she wanted to spend a week in Paris and I thought "This might be fun", so this might be the reason to come and do it. There are always six or seven things happening at the same time. I wouldn't come here if this was the only thing I had to do. I wouldn't leave my cushy life in L.A. to be in Basel on a crappy day. I don't think either of us is here promoting what we are doing.

Lawrence Weiner: I think that the nice thing about art is that it doesn't require the artist after it is made. So it doesn't really matter whether the artist is articulate, it doesn't really matter, whether the artist is intelligent. It really makes no difference in the fact that you are getting something put out there that requires no explanation and no table of contents.

But I came because I was showing the film. I am a lucky person. I have very decent human relations with the people that I work with and I really must say that it's another whole bargain for me. I basically like most of the dealers I show with. And I am not embarrassed by it. There is really nothing to be embarrassed about of trying to make a living with something you think is useful to the world, come on. I think this self-reflection of "is it moral, or this and this" – it doesn't really matter. That's really pragmatic stuff. Has nothing to do with the work. But I do think that the idea of an artist as a professional, making their living within the soci-

ety, interacting, is an extremely healthy thing. It's the hell a lot healthier than being subsidized. You do a job and if you are lucky you make a living. And if you are not lucky, you don't – very much like everybody else.

I don't teach. Because I don't think that artists should have authority. That's it. But I believe in teaching, I believe in education. But this continual complaining about it all – they don't quite realize that the CEO of a company is a bitch to make a living and an unemployed person is a bitch to make a living. It's the same existential crisis for every human being when they wake up in the morning; just some have it more comfortable than others ...

And I think we have reached the apex of our point ...

Jorge Pardo: There is a gentleman that has a question ...

Lawrence Weiner: Oh, okay.

Audience: Please tell us something about your actual projects. Does the political situation in the US play any role for your work?

Jorge Pardo: I am trying to sort of understand what the consequences of a different type of aesthetic might be on those objects that are historically loaded and ... but you know, there is a bunch of other projects.

In terms of the change in America I think we should all wait and see. McCain might still win, you know. I hope not, obviously. I personally have never made work that responds to those kinds of issues directly, but obviously indirectly. There are certain ideologies in the way the work is consumed that discount hopefully the way this government thinks and acts. So I don't know.

Lawrence Weiner: I am working on a body of work that's going to culminate in Barcelona, where we are going to question what constitutes a public sculpture and what doesn't constitute a public

sculpture. I'm much more interested at this point of being able to take the content and questioning again: "Is Galileo correct or is Galileo wrong?"

Concerning the politics of the United States I do hope optimistically that there will be a turn-around. Whether it's going to affect the quality of life of people soon enough, I don't know. And I am quite concerned about the loss of humanity that is happening in Europe at this moment. Where essentially all of the social services I grew up admiring within Europe are being slowly stripped away in order to acquire some patina of being modern, and modern is beginning to look like contemporary Chinese and contemporary American people. That's the political part.

But my questioning with the Barcelona project and my questioning with what we are doing in Malaga now, and various things that I want to be doing in the United States is to see what does constitute public, what does constitute non-public and where the object itself relays in it. That's what I am working on. So that's the best answer I can give – because I don't know the answer which is why I'm working on it.

Jorge Pardo: Thank you.

Lawrence Weiner: Again: Thank you.

Art Basel Conversations | Thursday, June 5, 2008 | 10–11.30 h |
Hall 1, Messe Schweiz

TRANSCRIPT | **PUBLIC/PRIVATE**
FORMING CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS
IN EASTERN EUROPE

What is the role of an Eastern European art institution and how has it changed in the last twenty years? What are the effects of globalisation on the local artists and art scenes? Which are the challenges, opportunities and risks posed by public-private partnerships in terms of defining an institution's vision? How does the development of auction houses, galleries, foundations and private collectors influence the programming of such institutions? And what kind of activities do institutions focus on generating a public for their program?

SPEAKERS | **ZDENKA BADOVINAC**
Director, **Museum of Modern Art**; Ljubljana, Slovenia

VIT HAVRANEK
Curator and Project Leader, **tranzit**; Prague, Czech Republic

MAGDA KARDASZ
Curator, **Zacheta National Gallery of Art**; Warsaw, Russia

JOANNA MYTKOWSKA
Director, **Museum of Modern Art**; Warsaw, Russia

Moderator | **HANS ULRICH OBRIST**
Co-Director of Exhibitions and Programmes and Director
of International Projects, **Serpentine Gallery**; London, England

Introduction | **Hans Ulrich Obrist**

Is everybody in? It is a great pleasure to moderate this panel today – this ongoing panel on the future of the museum.

If you think about the future of the museum in the 21st century – it's such a complex question ... It's almost like superstrings theory in science where you think about eleven dimensions. I think the future of the museum has at least eleven dimensions. And if you think about all these questions of globalization, the way how globalization impacts the museum, if you think about the complex questions of the private museum, of the public museum – these are all too big questions to be addressed in one single panel.

That's why we decided some years ago actually to develop a whole series of panels and I'm extremely thankful to Art Basel for the unique possibility to do this. Because very often a panel happens and one moves on and does the next panel. But in this case we have actually now for four years developed in a very sustainable way panels on the future of the museum.

It all started in Miami with a very general panel. Then we started to focus it more on different geographies. We were doing panels on the future of the museum in China, the future of the museum in the Middle East, the future of the museum in Latin America, the future of the Museum in the United States of America, the future of the museum in Europe – and today for the first time the future of the museum in Eastern Europe. This is not going to cover of course all Eastern Europe. For that we need more “future-panels”.

Thanks to our four wonderful speakers Zdenka Badovinac, Vit Havranek, Magda Kardasz and Joanna Mytkowska we will address here some of the big questions of the museum in Eastern Europe today.

As Joanna actually pointed out, there are new museums really all over Eastern Europe – besides Warsaw, Ljubljana and Prague, we are going to discuss today. Future cities also can include in Zagreb, Vilnius, Tallinn and Riga where you also

have very exciting new museums. And of course the future of the museum in Russia will be a panel for itself with all these new public and private museums popping out in Russia right now.

One of the things which we felt particularly important in terms of the museum in the Eastern European context is of course the question of globalization. And the negotiation between the local and the global. What are the challenges, opportunities and also risks actually caused by public-private partnerships? And in terms of an institution and a vision of an institution: What kind of activities do institutions focus on generating a public for their program? How to make public if, like Vito Acconci says, there is never such a thing as a given public space? It is always about “making public”.

And last but not least. I think what's particularly important in relation to the Eastern European museum, is the question of memory and also the question of pioneers. Here we are sitting nearby an Edward Krasinski piece, which is very moving to me because a couple of years ago me and Joanna Mytkowska were meeting Krasinski in his studio in Warsaw. He is one of the many examples of pioneering artists in Eastern Europe who really, until very recently, have not had all any presence in the museums. And I think all four protagonists present on the panel today have contributed in a major way to bring such artists like Krasinski and many others back into the awareness, back into the collections of the museums and have contributed in this sense to what Eric Hobsbawm, the great English historian, calls a “necessary and urgent protest against forgetting”.

Now we are going to have four presentations of all four speakers of about ten minutes and we then have another twenty minutes for questions. It is a great pleasure to welcome you here Zdenka Badovinac, who is Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana. A very warm welcome to Zdenka!

Zdenka Badovinac: Thank you very much Hans Ulrich and thank you for inviting me here to present the work of the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana, which was founded in 1948. So it's sixty years old now.

This is an image how it looked two years ago with a work of Nika Špan. [slide] You see this red and white thing around; this is normally used in front of buildings under construction. In this case, it was more about the idea of protected territories. So the museums are the territories which have to be constantly protected. You know we are talking a lot about the opening of the museums towards the environment, towards the visitors, the communities and everything. But at the same time I think this notion of protection is very valid and should be rethought. There are many forces around us. Economies, politics which are constantly like taking our autonomy and this is also the case in Ljubljana, especially in the last years.

This is how the museum looks today. [slide] Now it is really under construction as you can see. We started to renovate the building because it was of course in a very bad condition, but at the same time because of a lack of space. So we got of this very reason the other building, a former Yugoslavian army complex at Metelkova in Ljubljana. There we presented in 2000, when the Manifesta was in Ljubljana, the first collection of Eastern European new avant-garde art from the sixties to the present day. The collection was called "Arteast 2000+". It is one word; it is written incorrectly, because it is about the dialog between East and West, what we are going to do, but this dialog is never equal, there is always a lot of incorrectness among the different parts involved in the dialog.

What you can see here is the situation in the year 2003 with another exhibition, "Form Specific". [slide] In the last fifteen years we have been trying to reorganize the typical Eastern European national museum. You know that most of the Eastern art museums during the socialism were national museums because of many reasons. One of the reasons was permanent lack of money. It was of course very difficult to purchase interna-

tional art works. But also because of isolation, because of many known reasons. So one of our main goals in the last fifteen years was to find an answer to the question "How to go on? What has changed after the regime collapsed?"

The first idea was to reorganize the institution in a more contemporary way. This means also: in terms of contemporary art. In the time of socialism the contemporary art was kind of marginalized. It was not included – at least not enough – in the central art institutions. It was mostly presented in cultural centers for young people or students, because contemporary art has some kind of critical – socially and politically critical – dimension. So one of the most important goals was to include contemporary art in the museum. This of course provoked the question what contemporary art means. So in the last fifteen years we worked a lot with the ideas and the questions about the relation between modern and contemporary art. Maybe more than it is normal in other museum institutions. For us, the fact was important that the museums of modern art, which were founded in the thirties for contemporary art – what modernism was in that time –, through decades they became museums for historical art. Because modernism became a historical art – modernism became a historical style.

Due to these questions and the lack of space in our museum and due to the fact that we have got these two buildings we had to reorganize our activities in terms of splitting the works between two buildings. Then we decided to create two big departments out of one, and to divide our activities between a Museum of Modern Art and a Museum of Contemporary Art in the new building at Metelkova.

We are under construction in the existing building; this year we are going to renovate the army building and here is the maquette how it will look very soon. [slide] It is not just about Eastern art; it is – as I said – about the dialog with the Western art as well. Here is Lawrence Weiner's work. [slide] And here I can present you some of the works from the display from 2000 in the unrenovated

army barrack building. [slide] The collection has grown of course in the last eight years.

Our activities around the reorganization provoked many problems and disagreement, especially among more traditional artists and the cultural politics in Slovenia. The question was – we were founded as a 20th century art museum – how to deal with the older periods of the 20th century. And our answer was: We have to work on the traditional art from our perspective. So we did a serial of retrospective of very important Slovenian artists from 20th century. And for each display – as you can see here – we invited contemporary artists to make it. [slide] Tadeji Pogacar, a known Slovenian artist, did the display of the expressionist France Kralj. And the group “New Collectivism”, which is part of “Neue Slowenische Kunst”, did the design of the “Tank!” exhibition. “Tank!” was related to the avant-garde art from the twenties in Slovenia and they did it in a way the artists from that period would have liked very much. They transformed the walls with magazines, with original and copied works mixed together.

The problems with Moderna Galerija started severely with the Triennial of Slovene Art called “U3”. We invited Peter Weibel, the Austrian curator to do the selection. And he did it in his own way. It was about contemporary art and here is the work that one Slovene artist did with him, an interview. It provoked a big scandal and a severe cut of the budget for Moderna Galerija. It was of course not just because of contemporarity, it was also because of a turn of our institution strongly towards the context.

Especially in the first half of the nineties, we decided to rethink the position of the museum in its own context and at that time it was the war on Balkan. And to have a war in your neighbourhood is a really strong experience. So we started to work with this question: “What is the role of the museum in times of war or changes?” You know the social-political changes happened in the beginning of the nineties. First we started to work with the Balkan context. Together with some artists from Ljubljana and one artist, who lived at that

time in Ljubljana from Bosnia, Ana Adamovic, we created a collection, as a part of a future collection for Sarajevo. Through our institution we reacted towards the war in that way. In the second part of the nineties we started to work with the Eastern Europe context and in 1998 we did an exhibition “Body and the East” in relation to the body art from the sixties to the present day.

After the collection was presented in 2000, we started with a series of exhibitions, called “artist’s exhibitions”, related strongly to the redefinition of the Eastern European art history and art history in general. There were many projects since then. One was “The Seven Sins” I curated together with Igor Zabel and Viktor Misiano. It was an exhibition about the art from Russia and Slovenia. Here you can see some images. [slide] The rooms were displaying the art according to the seven sins like for example “Utopianism”, “Collectivism”, “Laziness”, “Cynicism” and so on.

The series of the artist’s exhibition continued with an exhibition where we presented artists from different periods from Eastern Europe. A lot of them were dealing with the questions of the archive. There were many artists from the beginning of the seventies collecting data on Eastern European new avant-garde art, which was, as you know, like forbidden in the public institutions. So artists from the beginning of the seventies like “Art Pool” from Budapest – here is the installation [slide] – they were collecting documentations on the art from their countries and the region, what the public institutions were not able to do because of many reasons, especially political reasons. And many contemporary artists, like Lia Perjovschi from Bucharest, are trying to redefine their own history, they are looking for their own local traditional heirs. That is very important for Eastern European young artists today. Also for example the IRWIN Group is constructing the Eastern European history, because most of us feel a big lack of the narrative of Eastern European art. And only when we have an Eastern European history, we can enter the equal dialog with the rest of the world.

We did some other exhibitions related to the collection, like “2000plus23”. Together with the very important magazine “Maska” we invited artists from different fields, also from the field of film and so on. They proposed works for 2023 and chose one work from the “Arteast Collection 2000+”, to be displayed in conjunction with their proposal. We exhibited the proposal on the white pedestal and the works from our existing collection they proposed were on the real floor.

When we started our renovation, the Ministry of Culture stopped financing our program. As the renovation works couldn't start in time we were very sad, because the museum was already closed for some months and we couldn't work. So that's why in one moment I decided to stop the silence and to make a big exhibition without any money. I sent a letter to the public and more than hundred people, not just artists, but also amateurs and children contributed and they did their own displays. In the exhibition everybody is a curator. Here you see for example “Yellow star” by Marjetica Potrč. [slide]

So for our activities in the museum this organic connection with the artist community and our colleagues from other institutions in Ljubljana is very important. We have really the most creative relationship with the cultural policy in Ljubljana at the moment. We are just renovating and there is no money for the program. The network of other galleries decided to share their spaces with us during the renovation and we initiated the project “Hosting Moderna Galerija”. So we have more than twenty spaces in Ljubljana for our program now. It is not only about presenting the work, it is also about the question of solidarity and alternative ways of networking and working of institutions in certain environments. This was the last exhibition presented in Škuc gallery in Ljubljana. [slide] Škuc gallery and its director Alenka Gregorič actually initiated the “Hosting Galerija Moderna” project. The last exhibition was called “Schengen women”. In the time Slovenia holds the presidency of the European Union, Moderna Galerija wants to open the question of new borders in

Europe. After the collapse of the Berlin wall there is a new Schengen border and these women from the wrong side of the border are trying to redefine their position and the position of Eastern European stereotypes of women. After the many stereotypes of socialist Eastern European women, we are now having the new stereotypes of refugees and prostitutes. Thank you.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Many, many thanks to Zdenka. I really must say that everything for me and my research in terms of Eastern Europe started with Zdenka. This is not only true for me, but for many Western curators. I will always remember a conversation I had with Harald Szeemann, who said the same thing, “Everything starts with Zdenka.” – In relation to the research in Eastern Europe.

Particularly interesting is this emphasis on archives which is something, which also popped up in earlier museum panels. When everybody talks about museums, archives are still kind of less emphasized. It is still more objects. I think for the 21st century museum this emphasis on archives will become very, very important.

That leads us directly to our next speaker, Vit Havranek, who is curator and project leader of tranzit in Prague. Also focusing a lot on archive, he has been instrumental in the rediscovery of a lot of pioneering artists in Prague, like Kovanda. And I think that's what is so important in the work of all the four protagonists this morning on the panel: All these artists we now see in documenta and the Biennials all over the world had actually very few exhibitions a few years ago. And if they are remembered, if they are visible now, it is thanks to our speakers today. A very warm welcome to Vit Havranek.

[Vit Havranek says nothing. He shows a PowerPoint presentation about the work of tranzit.]

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Many, many thanks to Vit Havranek for this invention of a new format of presentation. And now we travel from Prague to Warsaw and it is a great pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Magda Kardasz, who is curator at the

Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw and has worked a lot with Polish art, but also with international art as we can see in her recent, very distinguished program. She just opened a big show with Luc Tuymans after having organized the first retrospective big exhibition of Wilhelm Sasnal. Welcome Magda Kardasz.

Magda Kardasz: It is nice to be here. I want to tell you a little bit about Zachęta, but mainly I want to share my thoughts with you about how Zachęta's role should be redefined in the expanding new art field in Poland and also the Polish art scene being more and more present in the international art scene. I brought the annual report of the gallery, which we publish since some years – so if somebody is interested, please take a look as I will show you no images.

I want to briefly tell you about the history of the National Gallery of Art Zachęta. First of all, I want to say that this is not a museum and this actually is a little bit unclear position. The tradition of the institution goes back to the sixties in 19th century as the Zachęta was founded by this society. The building we have now was built in 1900 and slightly reconstructed after the war. The original building was not ruined during the war, which was rare for the center of Warsaw. It was built to show the old collection of 19th century classical academic art, especially huge paintings, for example of Jan Matejka. The biggest room was constructed especially to show his most known painting “Battle of Grunwald”. It was actually undertaken by Luc Tuymans that in his exhibition now he made a huge mural on this very wall.

So this was the story before the war. Of course there were temporary exhibitions at the same moment. At the beginning of World War II the old collection was hidden in the National Museum in Warsaw. It survived the war there and it stayed there after the war. So this is the old story of Zachęta, but somehow this old story is, I think sometimes, not over. The whole amount of expectations of being something more classical, more traditional, is still with us, however after the war

the Zachęta was opened for contemporary art. The very beginning of this new period was 1951 as the so-called “Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions” was created. It was the major kind of state-run organization to present contemporary art to the audience. It was all like centralistic in this communist system, so they created a whole chain of galleries for contemporary art, which were under the Ministry of Culture and Zachęta was the head office for that. They were sending their exhibitions to each bigger town in Poland, which had smaller galleries – which in majority are still existing, but they were transformed after the political change to city galleries most cases. So for all those years it was this very official place as well, which also casts a shadow on the contemporary activities of Zachęta.

After the political change there was the first moment to think anew about this very institution. I forgot to tell that after the war the collecting of contemporary Polish art was also part of the Zachęta program. The “Central bureau of Artistic Exhibitions” ended up with a quite very eccentric collection of good quality artworks with some artworks which were acquired for political reasons. The first rearrangement of the art collection was done after ‘89 and it's still going on. We soon will have another evaluation of it and so we will organize an auction with the purpose to have money to buy new artworks. So the collection after the political change started to be a little bit more focused and is more connected with the actual program of Zachęta: We try to buy an artwork of the Polish artists after their exhibitions – after both: big retrospective shows of more classical artists and the younger artists' exhibitions.

When the system changed also the name of Zachęta changed. In 1994 it started to be called “State Gallery of Art” and the “Zachęta” stayed as a name of this original society which founded the building – it was part of the longer name which was “Society to Encourage People to Fine Arts”. “Zachęta” is this encouragement. So in a way we try to stick to this previous idea to encourage people to fine arts, especially to contemporary

arts, which is in Poland still a big work to do. Every one of my colleagues would say the same.

So, one of the goals was to organize the retrospective exhibitions of classical contemporary Polish artists. Classical in the sense of the older generation that very frequently didn't have a proper exhibition with a catalog. In the nineties – it was not myself only, but of course also my colleague curators and my former director Anda Rottenberg and then the new director Agnieszka Morawińska – there were different shows of the Polish art scene organized. Actually, also Edward Krasinski, when he was still alive, had an exhibition in 1997. It was the last big show organized by himself. I was then working with him. And also Alina Szapocznikow was at Zachęta, it was the exhibition curated by Anda Rottenberg, with her first bigger catalog. So this is one line of the activities of the Zachęta.

The other thing is just to make up some gaps in the knowledge of the audience about the contemporary art scene from the world. This exhibition of Luc Tuymans is one of the examples of this type of shows we have. Last year there was a Bill Viola exhibition, curated by my colleague Maria Brewinska, and then Kim Sooja last year, Louise Bourgeois ... – so also there are very big names appearing from time to time, or quite frequently at Zachęta.

The space is big; it is about 1900 square meters of exhibition space. Plus there is also the separate space which belongs to Zachęta, which is called Kordegarda Gallery, which I run now for a year and a half. It is based more on working directly with the artists and making projects dedicated to Warsaw or other city spaces. The gallery has one wall with only windows, so in a natural way it somehow connects with the city.

There is also the huge documentation department which is a very strong part of Zachęta and which is not really visible when you come to see an exhibition. But it collects the documentation on Polish artists starting after the war. So it is not really focused on a certain group of artists, which gives like a broaden field. Of course it might be perceived as a collection of any artist, but it's a

value I think and it is also being used by students to doing some research. Also the educational department with lectures has been run for years.

At the end of the nineties the Zachęta was also the scene of this famous – or unfamous – story with the most violent censorship intervention in the Polish art scene. It actually took place at the anniversary exhibition of hundred years of the institution. It was an exhibition curated by Harald Szeemann and the piece was of Maurizio Cattelan: “La Nona Ora” – the pope is hit by a meteor. That time was pre-election time with all these campaigns; the piece was directly attacked by some right wing politicians, which sort of started a kind of wave of problems for the Polish art scene. But I think it had happened also because of this weight of the tradition of Zachęta. Because what I perceive as a problem, a little problem or a bigger problem, is this thinking about this institution in classical categories. Actually, for many years we have worked the same way like a Kunsthalle. The space is very big, the collection is most time in the storage, of course in the exhibitions sometimes there are parts of the collection presented but basically there are different shows at the same time being presented at Zachęta.

I thought about how the situation changed, with this field of many more institutions or organizations – it is not necessary to be on an institution level – working with contemporary art, which is growing in Poland. This makes me very happy, because it expanded the field and I find it competitive in a positive way. But somehow I feel angry when we are expected to be this one who is the more classical institution. Also the perspective of approaching the date of the opening of the proper contemporary art museum, the Museum for Modern Art in Warsaw, is a moment to rethink, to think about our position. There is also the Ujazdowski Castle Center for Contemporary Art – so it is an interesting moment because I believe at that point the museum will also take upon some of these obligations we tried to do in the nineties: like edit proper books for really good artists, conceptual artists from after the war or

earlier even, starting from avant-garde. So how will we exist together? This is the question for me and actually I think a challenge.

One of the topics proposed here were the relations between public and private. In Zachęta, last year we had some exhibitions of young Polish artists, but also a show of Gustav Metzger and the presenting of the Polish artists at the Biennial of architecture. Zachęta is also responsible of the organizational part of the Polish presence at the Biennial in Venice. Also we had this exhibition of Józef Czapski, who is a painter from the twenties and later, which was from the Aeschlimann collection. So this is one of the main points: We need private collectors on the ground of organizing especially the important artists' exhibitions: Exhibitions like Tuymans or Bill Viola of course, but also earlier works we try to borrow and persuade the private collectors that they should give us their pieces to this very specific exhibition. But we also had this exhibition of La Caixa collection, which is an insurance company which came into the Polish market. They came with some proposals to presenting their collection and the selection was made by one of the curators from our part and was also juxtaposed with presenting fragments of the collection of Zachęta, which was more conceptual works.

So I think in a very basic way we stick to the private sector. And of course, which is obvious to say, we look for sponsors each time because our budget is not allowing us to do bigger projects. I think it is a general problem or subject to watch out how it works and also to take profits, which we do. I think for Poland it is still this level that we are trying to be happy from having possibilities and I just still think of not to mix these two sectors too much. To keep it fair. Thank you.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Many, many thanks Magda Kardasz. For addressing so many of the topics of the negotiations between the public and the private, the East and the West, the old and the new. And we actually stay in Warsaw with our next speaker, Joanna Mytkowska. When we met for the

first time you were at the Foksal Gallery, doing pioneering work, putting on the map young artists such as Pawel Althamer and many others. But always linking it to artists from the sixties and seventies – that seems to link almost everybody here on the panel today. You moved then to Paris, to the Centre Pompidou. And Joanna has most recently been appointed as the director of the Museum Modern Art in Warsaw, a new museum, supposed to be opened, I think, in 2014 – so a very warm welcome to Joanna Mytkowska!

Joanna Mytkowska: Thank you for inviting me and thank you for giving me this possibility to share with you some of my experiences and to present the new project of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. Thanks to Magda also, who gave a very good introduction to the situation of the Polish art scene. I think what we have experienced in the last twenty years was a massive reform of the public institutions. Very differently than for example in former Yugoslavia we didn't have had proper public museums during the communist times. The existing structures of the public institutions were mostly galleries or institutions which were functioning like a Kunsthalle.

I have the feeling that what was bringing new ideas to the Polish art scene, was mostly the private sector. There were associations, foundations, and private initiatives that were very dynamic and radical and completely turned the scene. So for a certain period of time we have faced sort of a paradox. These private institutions were mostly operating in the international art scene. So there were a lot of new phenomena of Polish art which appeared first internationally and then were recognized locally. Now I think that we are regaining the balance, the equilibrium between private and public.

But there is still a huge field to be filled by the public sphere. And I think that it's especially important, because what happened in the last twenty years was that the contemporary art accompanied the changes, which happened in that part of Europe. For contemporary art that was a lot of

description, but also analysis of the aspirations, emotions, desires, which are connected with the changes in Eastern Europe.

I see that as one of the main challenges for the new museum. The new museum, which we are going to build in Warsaw in a few years, should be based on that artistic movement which managed on one hand to participate and on the other hand somehow to provoke the mental, political and social transformation in Eastern Europe. So like all museums are usually based on some important phenomena, we have this chance to follow the artistic movement which appears recently in Poland.

So I will try to tell you a bit about this project which is a governmental project. Initiated in 2005, the museum is founded by the Ministry of Culture. But the building will be built by the City of Warsaw. The opening is planned for 2014, the international competition was announced two years ago. The project is now a project by the Swiss architect Christian Kerez, who built the museum in Vaduz. Recently he completed a schoolhouse in Zurich. The government planned this new museum as a very big building of 25,000 square meters. 10,000 square meters will be dedicated to the exhibitions and the rest is for public events, archives, libraries, and other public functions.

One of the most exciting parts of the project is the location, which is in the very center of Warsaw next to a symbolic building built in 1955 – you can see it on the image – the Palace of Culture. [slide] That of course did get into the discussion about history and identity. And that was somehow connected with the expectations which were expressed during the architectural competition. That's still the images, which are dealing with the history of this location. [slide] This is the building of the Palace of Culture in the fifties. [slide] And that is one of the images which show the symbolic value of this Soviet building. [slide] What Christian Kerez proposed to build in that location is a building, which will not compete in the symbolic values of the architecture with the Palace of Culture. But which will rather be connected with the sur-

rounding, with the architecture of the late modernism around this huge square. It will also fit to the urban plan of Warsaw and it will deliver the possibility of the diverse, hybrid, open discussion. It will deliver a place for art and it will create a very direct binary position between the Palace of Culture and the symbolic values which are connected with this building.

So after announcement of the result of the competition we experienced one of the biggest debates on culture in the Polish society after 1989. Of course, it was a very controversial decision and a lot of people, art historians and architects expected something more representative. Something, which we call, to make it very short, the "Bilbao effect". Even if the Bilbao effect was the result of a long process of work on the whole structure of the city... So people expected a building which can easily symbolize the changes in one way.

Of course I am very happy with the result of this competition. Because we receive much more of the possibility of negotiation, of the dialog, of the identity of that building, of the center of Warsaw, of the place for contemporary art in that discussion. What is very important for me: The project started with a conflict. With the discussion of a conflict of the symbolic values. And that's something I perceive as a quite important beginning for a new museum of contemporary art.

I think we have an enormous chance being at that location in the very center of the city, being part of the discussion, of the future, and not only of the museum, but also of the public sphere of Warsaw. So that is one of the most important facts in the feature of that project.

What I am showing you here are renderings from the competition. [slide] That is not the actual project because Christian Kerez is now in the process of designing and we are expecting the architectural concept in October. This image shows the direction and the interest of the architect. He wants to use the volume and the horizontal, which is possible to achieve in that project. It looks more like a piece of landscape and that

probably remains one of the features of the future museum. So we will deal with quite a monumental building even if it's planned to be very rough and also delivers intimate spaces. These studies are direct from the studio of the architect. [slide] Some studies for the roof of the museum, which seems to be one of the most important parts of this project. [slide]

And then I would like to show you the photo from the ceremony of the Van-Gogh-prize, an important European prize for contemporary young artists which was recently received twice by a Polish artist. [slide] But I am not showing this to share with you national pride, but rather to show how important contemporary art becomes in the public discussion and in a wide public reception. The contemporary art becomes a real tool to negotiate a lot of social issues and that's also one of the important starting points for our project. With a project of this size and this location of course we are talking about a museum, which will have a mass public. We are expecting 800,000 visitors per year.

The other important thing is that we want to follow what artists have invented. I am showing you an image of a performance Pawel Althamer recently organized in London together with the London celebrity Jude Law. [slide] This is also showing that the invention of the artists, the art, has started very ephemeral and still is ephemeral. Another important feature is research and archives, a new historical research, not only dedicated to the local history of Eastern European countries, but also as a part of the re-writing of global art history. We are looking for new possible attitudes or approaches to the historical heritage. And as an example of that I would like to show you a small private museum which exists in Warsaw. It is the studio of Edward Krasinski, which is in one of Warsaw's blocks of apartments and it's now open for public. [slide] And then to mention one more recently rediscovered artist – here are a few images of Alina Szapocznikow, who is a Polish local hero, proto-feminist artist which is becoming widely known. [slide]

The museum is going to be built in 2014, so now we are operating in a temporary headquarter. It is a space in the center of Warsaw, where we are organizing events and where we are enjoying a quite big interest already. Just to give you an idea of the direction how we want to develop the project before the building will be built, I would like to show you the first two exhibitions we are preparing in the temporary headquarter. [slide]

The first is dedicated to the experiment in the Yugoslavian art. It was important for us to start with an international project, with a project that will be important in the context of the region Eastern Europe. The project is showing the revolutionary changes in art, which happened in the sixties and seventies and that's the moment when the language of contemporary art was invented. So it was an important beginning for the institutions. We initiated research and made an exhibition based on the experimental art, mostly film and performance, in former Yugoslavia. Also the country, which doesn't exist, was another interesting context for that exhibition. And the architecture of the show, also the furniture, is designed by a Polish artist, Monica Sosnowska.

The support of the artists in creating the institutions is one of the most important features we will stress while building our museum. And then we stress the importance of the recontextualization of the Eastern European history internationally. The project, which we opened last Tuesday with the American artist Sharon Haze, picks up important slogans from the public protest. [slide] On this slide we can see the slogan "We are against American aggression in Vietnam", which is from the demonstrations in 1968 in Poland. This also shows the difference between the 1968 tradition in Eastern Europe and in the Western world. [slide] She was protesting with the old slogans on the streets of Warsaw, and trying to test the memory of protest. And how much the old slogans are valid today. So she was protesting this anti-American slogan from communist times next to the marketplace, where is a huge Vietnamese community. So, that was to give you a few ideas about the de-

veloping of the project. Of course we need a lot of passion, energy and luck. Because there is a lot of risk related to this sort of big and public investment in culture in Eastern Europe. And it is connected with the rebuilding of the whole city in the needs of the new museum. There is the new subway line. It's connected with rearranging the main square in the front of the Palace of Culture, where now we have a temporary market square. It is related to a lot of – not even cultural – but social issues and limitations. Of course also limitations of the budget. But we strongly hope we open the museum in 2014. Thank you.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Many, many thanks Joanna. How very exciting it is to see for the first time images of this new museum! One of the topics, which played a big role in many of the museum panels so far, is this necessity to reconnect the proximity of artists to museums, that Joanna emphasized. Also this idea of the provisorium is an interesting idea, I think. Johannes Cladders, the great German director of Mönchengladbach who is now in his late seventies, once said that before he got his new museum by Hollein in Mönchengladbach, there were a couple of years of provisorium and it was those years of provisorium, which really allowed radical experimentalism to emerge.

Now we have actually answered all my questions already within the speeches. We are also running out of time soon, but I just want to ask you one question, which I was always particularly curious about, and which has actually to do with the East and the East connecting to the East. We have spoken a lot about Eastern-Western dialogs. I think it is a very interesting moment, where still in the eighties, when Kasper König did his groundbreaking show “Westkunst”, the museum question was very much a question of the West. And it's almost like in a Fernand Braudel *longue durée* kind of way: Over the last ten, twenty years there are these extraordinary emerging museums and artist in the East, in Eastern Europe, in China, all over Asia, in the Middle East, in India – something which played a big role in all of these panels.

When I visited Eastern Europe quite frequently, I realized very often, that there were actually quite a lot of dialogs to the West, but there were not so many dialogs from the East to the East. For example, when we did a China exhibition in Bucharest at the opening of the museum there, there was a very strange question, “Why China in Bucharest?” And even for example Moscow is not so connected to China. And at the same time I had also the feeling visiting Eastern European cities that they were very often actually more connected to the West than to other places in the East. So to cut a long story short, I was curious if you could talk a little bit about how to connect the East to the East.

Joanna Mytkowska: So maybe I will start. I just showed the exhibition, which is the beginning of our project: It is based on the research in Eastern Europe, in former Yugoslavia. One of the reasons we decided for that is of course that what has happened in the late sixties and seventies in former Yugoslavia is very parallel to what was happening in Poland. Even if the art in that time in former Yugoslavia was much more advanced and much more internationally connected. We are all collaborating on that research; there is a lot of initiatives, magazines on exchanging information, archives, and artist's possibilities. I have the feeling that it is becoming one of the central topics in Eastern Europe to more and more collaborate on that field. Somehow on our own history.

Vit Havranek: I have the feeling that this is just the case in the last six or five years. Of course there were different dynamics in the nineties. I think in the nineties all the Eastern European countries were really more orientated towards the West and tried to reconnect with the Western development. It's a pretty new shift that is coming now. I think that Zdenka was more pioneering for long years in this East-East connection. She is really a pioneer of it. So she knows the dynamics the best.

Zdenka Badovinac: Especially during socialism we had more information on the West than on the East. But also now the situation is very complex. For example, I don't want to go into details, our artist collection became kind of indicator of the political climate in Slovenia. We have a right government in Slovenia. Luckily we have elections in October; we are waiting for the best. But you know, a lot of the politicians in Eastern Europe want to erase the history and this includes Eastern European art as well. That's a new moment, which should be elaborated.

Magda Kardasz: I think the same; it was rather a question of the nineties making up the gap between East and West, but it's not valid anymore. And for Zachęta and for myself, there was always a special interest toward the East, Russia especially. I did a show with about 30 artists in 1995 in Zachęta, quite big, and people were saying that they were waiting for something like that because the gap was already big. The exhibition traveled through Russia, made for exchange with Polish artists – Althamer, Sasnal, just to mention a few names of the known artists, and much more of the younger ones. It also traveled to the Baltic countries. So this is my experience of really close cooperation. Also with CAC in Vilnius, we already cooperated several times, recently in doing an exhibition about Australia and New Zealand for both audiences, with a curator from there and myself. So I think another level of cooperation already exists.

Joanna Mytkovska: It is probably one of the very few directions we can go with our institutions: working more and more on the Eastern European connection. That's what we can add to the global discovery. So it seems to be a pretty obvious line at the moment. And even a dominating trend, I would say.

Zdenka Badovinac: And the next step is a stronger collaboration between the institutions.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: That's a great conclusion, I think. A great conclusion of this panel. I would like to thank you all very much. I'm sure you might have some questions, but we are obviously running out of time. But as often, the most important, the most urgent things happen during the coffee breaks. So I suggest we are now having a coffee break where you can ask the speakers all the questions you have. We continue then for those of you who are still around at four o'clock with the conversation with Victor Man, one of the leading artists from Rumania who also runs an incredibly exciting space. So I would say it with Douglas Gordon, "It's only just begun." Thank you very much.

Art Basel Conversations | Friday, June 6, 2008 | 10–11.30h |
Hall 1, Messe Schweiz

TRANSCRIPT | **ART COLLECTIONS**
COLLECTING, PROTECTING AND PROJECTING
NEW MEDIA

What role do new media play within a museum collection?

What does it mean to maintain a collection of new media?

Which technical challenges do new-media collections pose in terms of conservation and future presentation?

What are the challenges, risks and opportunities of collecting new media?

And what are the specifications and focus for creating such a collection?

SPEAKERS | **CHRISTOPH BLASE**

Head of Laboratory for Antique Video Systems,
ZKM Center for Art and Media; Karlsruhe, Germany

STUART COMER

Film and Video Curator, Tate, London, England

PAMELA KRAMLICH

Kramlich Collection; San Francisco, USA

PIP LAURENSEN

Head of Time-based Media Conservation, Tate; London, England

Moderator | **CHRISSIE ILES**

Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art; New York, USA

Introduction | **Chrissie Iles**

Welcome so early in the morning. As it is Art Basel 10 o'clock is quite early in the morning ... I am Chrissie Iles, curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and I'm moderating this panel, which is titled "Collecting, Protecting and Projecting New Media." I have a very experienced panel with me: I've to my left Stuart Comer, film and video curator at the Tate in London, and Pamela Kramlich from San Francisco, China expert and Head of the Kramlich Collection – the largest and most important collection of film and media in the world. And I have to my right Pip Laurensen, Head of Time-based Media conservation at Tate in London. And I have to my far right Christoph Blase, Head of Laboratory for Antique Video Systems at ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe in Germany.

What we are going to do this morning is to talk a little bit about different experiences of collecting, projecting and preserving films, video installations, slides, new media etc. We're going to address five points you can see in your program: Why is collecting film and media important? What role does it play in the museum collections? What does it mean to maintain those works in a collection – private or public? What are the differences to other media? What are the challenges? What are the risks? How does the market impact the collecting of film and video and finally: How will the film and video collections we are all building be understood in 100 years? Or one might even ask: in 400 years and on and on?

We start with a few introductory comments. Collecting film and media did not start in the nineties. In the contrary to the popular belief it actually started when videos emerged in the sixties and I think it is very interesting to remember that video and film installation emerged in the early sixties alongside pop, minimalism, conceptual art, performance and structural film. So when we think of collecting film and video it is like collecting a painting by Warhol – He did paintings to finance his films. One of the earliest video installations,

Les Levines "Iris" for example, was made for a private collector who then gave it to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, that's in 1968. Nam June Paik showed in uptown galleries as early as 1963. The Howard Wise Gallery in New York was in a full sale in the late sixties – so really this has been going on for a long time.

Given, that video and film emerged in the sixties as a part of the conceptual or minimalist tradition, as a part of the re-writing of the language of art making, which took place in the sixties, the question is not, "Why should we collect film and video?" The question is: "Why should we not collect film and video?" So if we think of the nineties, when the majority of the museums started to collect film and video, we have to remember that everything that we do always – I'm sure you all agree with this – is driven by the artist and what the artist does. We're always responding to the artist. And in the early nineties a young generation of artists was creating works which were very installational and very cinematic – in terms of moving image, in terms of content. And we all responded to that: The gallerists responded, the collectors responded, the museums responded. And here we are, a decade and a half later, really looking at how far we come and how far we have still to go. And we look at the artists in the 1990s, Matthew Barney, Douglas Gordon, Tacita Dean, Pipilotti Rist, Stan Douglas, Shirin Neshat or Isaac Julien – there are hundred of artists who really always defined the 1990s. At the same moment, the painting really asserted itself simultaneously. This is also the moment when filmmakers started moving into the gallery, whether Godard or Chantal Ackerman. We have also been going the other way: Cinema was moving into gallery and artists were moving into cinema.

I'm just going to conclude my few short comments by saying that collecting film and video on a basic level is no different to collecting painting. You start with quality. And quality has to underline everything we do in all our collecting. At the Whitney, when I came in 1998, I started a committee for film and video, to bring it into the museum.

Because we had very few holdings of film and video and there was no place for it to enter the museum. And the other thing I wanted to do – and every museum is different – was to focus on our history and then bring it up to the present. And the Whitney’s history, emerging in New York in the late sixties in the Breuer building was to really be where artists were breaking out. With shows like “Anti-Illusion” and with performances by Bruce Nauman.

So the Whitney now has a very strong collection of film installations from the sixties and seventies. We have a special collection of artist’s film from the sixties and seventies. We have the Warhol film project which we work on with The Museum of Modern Art in New York, a joint project since 1986. We are doing Warhol’s catalogue raisonnée of his films. We have Callie Angell funded by the Warhol Foundation. And we have of course the young artists. We buy a lot of art at Biennials and have done traditionally always. So with us film and video has come into the collection – both through this historical argument and also through the Biennials where we for example bought Doug Aitken’s first big installation you may have seen in the Venice Biennale.

Another important thing to remember is film. It is film and video and slides. We have a responsibility to actually show work in mediums that other people might not be able to handle. There may not be celluloid in a hundred years time; it’s up to us trying to address that. Because in the future maybe that’ll be the only place where we can see this kind of work. I also think it’s interesting to see the piece of Bruce Conner in Art Unlimited. That would have been unthinkable – to show an experimental filmmaker for a gallery ten, fifteen years ago. A lot is changing.

So with those few introductory thoughts I’m going to handover to – I’m going round from left to right – to Stuart Comer from Tate so that he can tell us his thoughts on the subject.

Stuart Comer: As Chrissie suggested, I think when we ask ourselves why collecting this material is

important, we need to be looking backwards and forwards at the same time. We’ve just recently closed an exhibition on Duchamp, Man Ray, and Picabia at Tate Modern. It included Duchamp’s groundbreaking film “Anemic Cinema”. “Anemic Cinema” was actually intended to be projected originally on a reflective surface. So even at the beginning of the 20th century artists were complicating the projection of images; in this case one that was quite psychedelic and reflecting back – both at the viewer and the projector. So from the beginning we were thinking about film as something that really was an installation that energized and activated the space, the viewer, the artist, the projector and the film itself.

Many of these tropes were picked up in the 1960s, as Chrissie has suggested, at the height of minimalism. Film became indeed a more extended practice and one that situated itself in the gallery space as well as the traditional cinema space. In my mind, it’s exactly these sorts of architectural problems we need to be addressing and thinking about. I think that most museums still have not really figured out – or challenged themselves to figure out – how to present this work successfully.

Luckily there have been several exhibitions in recent years. Notably Chrissie’s exhibition “Into the light” at the Whitney Museum or “X-Screen” that was curated by Matthias Michalka at MUMOK in Vienna. With these we began to survey how this work has been presented in a more expanded situation and the challenges that we face became much more apparent to us. One of the biggest problems is that much of this work – especially film installations – has not been shown much for decades. As it begins to be exhibited more and thought about more we begin to identify the problems and the challenges and hopefully to address them more successfully.

I’m sure in the conversation we will address initiatives like “Media Matters”, which is a collaboration initiated by Pam Kramlich. Again, it’s forcing us to get on the ball and to begin to think about how to situate this work in our collections, but

also how to preserve it. We are really at risk of losing massive chunks of history if we don't begin to take on board this material. Much of the early history of video art was actually broadcasted on television and is already lost to us. So if we do not begin to really address other early video practices, not to mention film practices, we are losing completely one of the most critical parts of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Now every single one of us on a daily basis uses a computer, a laptop, an iPhone – whatever you use, you are dealing with moving images with a greater and greater proximity to yourself. And if we can't begin kind of engage critically with this through advanced cultural practices then we are really at risk, I think, by not understanding the way that moving images actually are shaping our daily life.

Collecting film and video *does* differ from collecting other artworks in collections although in many ways there are overlaps. I think in the past two decades or so, the rise of installation art practices and ephemeral art practices certainly have had a huge bearing on some of the problems we face with the ephemeral nature with a lot of this kind of media. Not to mention the fragility of it, as Chrissie mentioned. We need to ensure that we are maintaining it for the next century and more. Digital media and video can even be trickier because the formats change so quickly. The challenges have not been completely understood by most museums yet and I think this is something we all need to be encouraging, so that we really can begin to do both: collect and preserve it for the future.

In terms of the actual market – since we are in the middle of an art fair: Chrissie has mentioned the filmmaker Bruce Conner and there are other artists, Morgan Fisher is in the Art Unlimited this year, in previous years Anthony McCall has been presented here – these are all filmmakers who primarily came out of the underground and experimental film movement in the sixties, but who are more and more frequently included in venues like the Berlin Biennial or in Art Unlimited, and

often to huge success. I think that now people are beginning to see this work, in many cases for the first time; and they realize the magnitude of the achievement of this work and so therefore of course there is market activity around it. That kind of retroactive engagement in the market can be a tricky thing, especially in a medium that is reproducible. So when we get into editioning this is one of the biggest questions that faces not only work being made now, but work that was made in the 1960s and that is recognized by the market today.

And then looking forward to the next hundred years: I think there are a number of ways in which we will probably begin to engage with this work. As we were discussing earlier obviously the development of platforms like YouTube or UbuWeb are just the beginning. And although they are not the correct or ideal way to see this work, they at least make the work available to the public in a way that it was not previously. As museums, we need to challenge ourselves to be showing this work properly projected and making the most of the spatial and architectural context in which a lot of this work is intended to be seen.

That said, I thought it was very interesting at Centre Pompidou two years ago in Philippe-Alain Michaud superb “Le mouvement des images” exhibition. In the exhibition itself many people would actually sort of walk by films that have been carefully restored so that they could be projected on video. Their engagement was actually often just for a few seconds. Whereas in a very small room next to the exhibition there were series of monitors on desks on which you could access the entire video collection of the Pompidou. I noticed that many young students would spend over an hour watching videos in that collection – I think because we are all accustomed to our computers.

I think how we will engage with this work will change. That's why we still need to consider how we show it in the galleries and make the presentation as successful as possible. Video is a portable medium and an incredibly fluid medium. If you look at something like Doug Aitken's project at

MoMA last year, which was projected on the façade of the museum's building – these sorts of presentations and again more mobile presentations, not to mention watching the work at home, will increasingly become factors in the way all of you engage with the work in our collections.

So not only do we need to collect the work, preserve the work and make sure that it's as accessible as possible. We need to really think about how it is presented and how to prepare ourselves for the radical shifts in the kinds of platforms we will develop. I think I'll leave it at that.

Chrissie Iles: Thank you very much Stuart, I absolutely endorse everything you said. Pam, what's your perspective from the point of view? Of somebody who spent twenty years building a collection of film and video?

Pamela Kramlich: When we started collecting video art 21 years ago, I could have only dreamed of being part of this distinguished panel, in front of this audience. I was the only one out there collecting video. I was forging my way into this area which I felt very strongly about because my husband was in Silicon Valley working with technology. Every day, I heard about all the wonderful new technological developments that were happening, that would change our lives and the way we communicate with each other, and deliver images to the world. It seemed important that someone preserve the artwork that was going to come out of that particular period of art history. A wonderful collecting community was developing around the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco. Jack Lane became our Director, and along with him came John Caldwell as Curator. They had worked together at the Carnegie in Pittsburgh and produced the Carnegie International, which has become a very important contemporary art show. John was a wonderful mentor for me, he encouraged us to start the collection. After we went to documenta in 1987 where we were enchanted with the single channel tape by Fischli & Weiss' "The Way Things Go". Back in San Francisco, I decided

to call Sonnabend in New York and order a copy of the tape. I talked to Antonio Homem, who said it was possible. It was \$350, so I gave him my credit card over the phone. That's the simplest thing I ever did, and a little different from the way we are buying artwork today! From then on, it got extremely complicated.

The next work was Gary Hill's "Cut Pipe" with two screens and two speakers. Then came Dara Birnbaum's "Tiananmen Square: Break-In Transmission" with five screens and eight speakers. Now I'm living in China and I'm realizing how amazing that work of art is – I think it's one of the great contemporary history works of art. It's done with sound and images, which makes it quite different from Manet's works or Picasso's "Guernica" and the like. The thing that was amazing in the beginning was that it was difficult to buy these art works; at least, I didn't really feel confident enough in those days to buy them without actually seeing them installed. So I was traveling a lot to various shows around the world. There were two shows at the Reina Sofia – one with Bill Viola and one with Bruce Nauman. It was very exciting, because I felt like a part of what was on the cutting edge. I was able to buy some fabulous pieces as the field had been developing since the 1960's, and there was a strong body of work to select from.

As Chrissie was mentioning, the field started in the 1960's, but I didn't start collecting until the end of the 1980's, so I had the advantage of going back over some 30 years of material. There were full bodies of work that I could select from – times have definitely changed. Now we are in a race for the new material. There is little time to research a piece before buying it. That is not the way we crafted the collection.

I've known Chrissie all these years, and I've had wonderful support from her and the people who have also believed in video. The many representatives of the artists, and the museums who have also pioneered collecting in this area. I've been in a very privileged position as I had the interest early on. It's not very often that you can be unique in doing something in the art world. I feel very lucky!

Chrissie Iles: Thanks Pam. Of course, as Pam was actually mentioning, one of the key issues in collecting film and video is its long-term conservation. And we're really very concerned – all of us. One of the very big problems is how to address the changing formats and how to conserve the relatively stable medium of celluloid for example. If there are no factories making celluloid, we can't replace these film prints in 100, 200 years time. We are all talking to people in the industry whether it is Kodak, trying to persuade them not stopping to make Ektachrome. Hollywood is in the same position as we are and film archives are in the same position as we are, so there is a sort of a critical mass of people who care very deeply about this.

I would say that – and in my opinion galleries need to address this much more thoroughly – it's absolutely never okay to sell a DVD. That's like selling as Xerox, please don't get your artist to sign a DVD because DVDs actually will end up in disappearing. Get them to sign papers that go with the DVD which should go of course with archival material. DVD is really not a serious collecting format. I just say that because I'm shocked how often people seem not to understand this. Still.

With that, I am going to turn to two very experienced experts in the field of conservation of film and video. We couldn't do our work without them: Pip of the Tate.

Pip Laurensen: Chrissie presented to us a number of very interesting questions and as somebody who is part of the team that is responsible for the conservation of the collection of time-based media works at Tate, the question of "why collect" for me is very much about the opportunity to spend time and resources on the preservation of these works which might otherwise be lost.

If you train as a conservator it is inevitable that you are very focused on the material challenges of these works and actually there are some real material challenges – we all know about the need to migrate video signals and the obsolescence of technologies. But early in my career I realized very quickly that there was, when we are dealing with

installations, an awful lot of information that was absolutely critical to capture if we were to effectively conserve these works and that this information was at risk of being lost. This has to do certainly with the nature of the collection that we are dealing with at Tate. These works are installed events and if we don't capture what the context is in terms of the details of the space and how the work should be presented, then we've really lost something critical. To build that sort of knowledge and understanding of these works, seeing them in the museological and art historical context, is very important for us at Tate.

When thinking about the identity of these works, and in particular their relationship to particular technologies, I often go back to a discussion which comes from the philosophy of music about musical performance. The philosopher Peter Kivy asked a wonderful question; if a Bach fugue was played by a choir of Kazoos – would it still be the same Bach fugue? I think that's actually really an important question to ask about every one of the works that we are dealing with when trying to understand the meaning of the technology in relation to the work. So for example would a Gary Hill cathode ray tube monitor work still be the same work if it were shown on a series of flat screens?

Another question that Chrissie asked us to consider was "How does collecting film and video differ from collecting another medium?". I know in terms of our conservation practice that the real difference is that we have to be extraordinarily preemptive in thinking about preservation and we have to work closely with the artist in developing conservation plans very early on in the life of a work. When this works well it is a collaborative process of dialog with the artist in order to understand what it is about these works that we are trying to preserve.

I have found it useful for time-based works to conceptualize what it is that we are acquiring as a bundle of rights: the right to display the work, the right to loan it, the right to preserve it. And my job as a conservator is to ensure that we have

what we need to enact those rights into the future. In practice this means making sure that you have an adequate master tape and a strategy for dealing with that into the future. That you have the information about how the work is installed and what it is that you are setting out to preserve in terms of the details of the installation such as the space you are going to show it in and the technology that it's going to be experienced on. All those questions ...

I feel that the sort of minds that we have working on the preservation and conservation of time-based media works are extraordinarily sensitive and inventive in terms of making sure that we manage these works as we move into the future. However I think that the idea of loss is a very interesting issue. If we consider what these works will look like in a 100 years it is interesting to compare them to more traditional works. Consider for example Van Gogh's "Almond Blossoms" from 1890 which has changed radically because of the fading of the red pigment. In this case because of the change in the pigment the whole balance of that painting is entirely different. In some cases we accept very radical degrees of change and loss in traditional works.

Time-based media works are vulnerable, and they have very different sorts of vulnerabilities to traditional works of art because of their technological dependence. Actually the majority of the works in our collections are very vulnerable to the risk of undesirable change and our job in the conservation department is to understand the nature of those risks, the nature of the losses faced and to try to minimize them and the impact that they have on the work and, increasingly, place that in context for the public.

Thinking about time-based media conservation we've got old challenges related to the obsolescence of technologies and we've also got new challenges to do with the management of new emerging technologies and also issues of sustainability as our collections grow. Tate is currently acquiring over fifty time-based media works of art a year and each one demands a very particular

sort of attention in terms of what we're trying to preserve and the sort of technological challenges that we're facing. I think that attention is a really important issue and individual time spent understanding these works is terribly important. In many cases this type of focus is only possible within the context of projects, which Pam and others have funded, that enable research on particular groups of works. Such projects are essential in moving this new area of conservation forward.

I am mindful of the fact that we are at an art fair and in thinking about the impact on conservation of the current market I have a couple of observations to make. Increasingly museums are buying works from art fairs which form something akin to prototypes. This demands that museums invest a significant amount of time working with the artists to get to a point that these works can be displayed 71 hours a week at Tate Modern. This is a role that conservation and curatorial staff within museums are playing; accompanying these works into their different life within the museum.

With a very buoyant market we also see early works being bought that were created in an entirely different context than the current market and museum context. So for example works which were created outside the language of editions and outside the notion of public display. I think there are very interesting questions to be asked about how we show these works and how we contextualize them within our collections.

Chrissie asked the 100-year-question and I think some time-based media works are very robust, but others are more dependent on particular technologies and this is where our greatest challenges lie. As part of the project "Matters in Media Art" I interviewed various key players from London galleries. In one memorable interview one of the gallerists came up with a very beautiful idea, which was to talk to the artists she represents about the idea of a time capsule: This time capsule would contain ideas about how a work might exist in a 50 or in a 100 years time. The point about a time capsule is that it is not accessible until the future. This would prevent the problem of a lack of effort

going into slowing down the speed to which these works may change and the rate of loss that these works might experience.

I think we have to be really careful to make sure that we don't lose important things about these works by moving too rapidly through technological changes. So I guess with that I'm now going to handover to Christoph.

Chrissie Iles: Thanks Pip. Christoph, the issue from your point of view...

Christoph Blase: It was several times pointed out today that video started in the sixties and in the seventies. But we don't know so much about the sixties and the seventies. We have a certain amount of videos; we know Nam June Paik, Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci. But I guess we don't know anything about 80% of all the video production which was produced in the early seventies. Not because this production is lost, but because it's not possible to see it, I think. The tapes often exist in museum depots, at the artists, we find them everywhere. Not the tapes are lost, but the machines are lost, the possibilities to show it, the possibilities to transfer it. All this stuff is lost. And so we at the ZKM in Karlsruhe started in 2004 to build up a lab for antique video systems.

What you see here is our lab and you see a lot of so-called half inch open reel machines. [slide] That was a tape material all the video art and all the documentation were made on in the sixties and seventies. And to answer the questions that Chrissie gave us, I brought with me a piece we reconstructed. Because there is the question what are we doing with all this material, what are we doing for example with the first Closed Circuit installation in Germany? This is exactly what I want to show you. [slide] It's from 1970, from the group "telewissen" around Herbert Schumacher. It was done in the city of Darmstadt, on a December evening and he was driving with a Volkswagen camping bus through the city. He opened the bus and there was a TV set and a camera and the people saw themselves for the first time – remember

it was nearly 40 years ago – in a television set. The people were very astonished about it. Today, this is absolutely normal. Today you see yourself every day several times on a monitor but in this time it was a sensation.

Please start the video. [video] On the right side you see the original tape, 38 years old, and on the left side you see the remake we made in the exhibition in January. And here you see the installation, I would say, the romantic reconstruction of the piece.

The remake was taped with the original machines from the seventies, so it's again black and white. The problem was that I needed one second of the original with no people in it. We found one second that was done on a tram station as you see. Then we built this big picture with a photograph still out of this video so that people have the same background like in the original – it's like a theater stage. The echo you hear in the sound file was done by a tape recorder. We organized the same type of tape recorder again. So everything is in the original technique. That's the monitor like Schumacher used 38 years ago in the bus so that the people could see themselves immediately, that's an original Sennheiser microphone.

You see that the original is on the TV set on the right side. We spoke a little bit about presentation. In my point of view, it is not allowed to make a projection with the original from 1970. This piece has to be shown in an original good black and white monitor, in a tube monitor. But the production we made has to be projected because it is a production with all the possibilities we have today with DVD and with digital media and so on. This point is very important for us. We don't like the projection of videos which were never projected; you have an absolutely other atmosphere in black and white videos when you see them on a flat screen. Sometimes I see at art markets old videos from the seventies on a flat screen. I think it's a really horrible thing. If you look around here at Art Unlimited you'll see a lot of tube monitors – it's astonishing. Compare them and I think you will love again tube monitors. Okay, thank you very much.

Chrissie Iles: Thank you, Christoph. Well – everybody has raised a lot of very important questions here. And what we are going to do now is just discuss them all a little bit between us before opening questions out to you so that you can become involved in the discussion.

Especially when we are talking about collections like yours Pam, and that of the Tate, the Whitney, ZKM, MoMA, Pompidou, the Walker – major museums that are really building this history –, I think what is very important, is what Stuart said about the need to act now before chunks art history become lost to us.

And as Christoph is saying – that even in museums with people like us who spend all our time with this 80% of what was generated in video from the sixties and seventies is not visible. It's very easy to see Nauman and Acconci and the well-known artists – partly through Castelli selling band tapes and films, which was a very early attempt to make this kind of work available. But it has to be said that because of equipment, because of a lot of technical problems, we've still got a long way to go.

The same is true with film and I think that the context within which we show work in the museum is very important. We not only need to see the installations that we collect and the single-channel works. We also have to think about showing film as film. There is this trend now to think of the cinematic as being a gallery painted dark grey. Even with a film projection let's not forget about the booth. I am now not talking about the booth at Art Basel – that's another very important kind of booth – but I am talking about the other booth, which is the projection booth.

No museum except the Whitney has a projection booth built in the middle of the exhibition floor and that's because we ran out of money to build a proper cinema. But that became our strength because it means that you can walk through from a painting show and see a Robert Beavers film all day, everyday for two months – which is what we did. As a result Roberta Smith came and saw it. She never would have done that if the film would have

been screened at 7 o'clock in the evening. We got a very beautifully written review two thirds of a page in the fine art section of the New York Times by someone who got totally into independent film – made by a filmmaker who is basically making an art work. So the context in museums is very important and the ability not to be afraid of what apparently is difficult mediums whether it is antique video, film loops or slide projectors.

There is also the issue that was raised about the portability of artworks. Jonas Mekas has made 365 films for your iPod. If you go to Jonas Mekas' website you can download 365 films each I think three minutes long, one for every day of a year. That's Jonas Mekas, who is in his mid-eighties now and one of the pioneers of experimental film and new American cinema, really taking on the portability question that Stuart raised. I think that's extraordinary and we really need to think about that and how that relates to what Pam was saying about large scale installations and physical space. And, as Pip was saying, how also to understand that as a scholar, as a young curator emerging or even as an artist by having diagrams and by having things very well mapped – also into the future. We cannot take for granted the fact that in fifty or even in twenty years time anyone will understand the kind of spatial issues, the formal issues that we are taking for granted now, because we are in the middle of his. We know the artists and it's all very current. But soon we all will be art history or history and we need to make sure that everything we leave behind us is understandable for the future and it also can be built on.

So I think all those issues are extremely important to bear in mind. We also heard a little bit about the impact of the market. But again there is a lot more to do. This is a great start, but ... What do you – all of you having heard what everybody else has said – what do you think are the main issues that we need actually to tell people now who are gathered at Art Basel because they are interested in what we do everyday? What are the salient points you think we really need to discuss after this initial raising of issues? I mean for example Stuart, you

talked about the Picabia/Duchamp show and that people have not to date really been projecting Duchamp's "Anemic Cinema" on a mirror, so actually the meaning of that film has not been understood properly. Also those kinds of issues – of having the opportunity to show a film in a museum space which is not that easy often to do because painting and sculpture tend to dominate. Do you see a shift occurring in museums and museum's ability to take on this kind of medium?

Stuart Comer: We were for example projecting "Anemic Cinema" in different ways at the same time. So it was in the gallery, on a DVD, and to follow your point – I agree ideally one should strive to project this kind of work in a way that's suitable to its original presentation. I mean after all we are museums and this is again a way how we distinguish maybe from YouTube.

It becomes a financial problem to project a film on long periods of time. Although we have just installed a piece you have mentioned earlier, Dan Graham's "Two Correlated Rotations", which is the first media installation that Tate purchased in the early seventies and it was never shown. Simply because logistically it was so challenging. Thanks to a lot of very hard work on the part of Pip and her team we were able to install it two weeks ago. But with the Duchamp film, not only were people able to see it in the exhibition in the context of a number of other kinetic spinning sculptural works that he had done. We were also showing it in our cinema where you can come and discuss it in a more discursive environment. I think the discursive aspect of the film is critical. But we don't actually own "Anemic Cinema".

In Britain, traditionally film was collected by the British Film Institute and Tate was supposed to collect art. As those things have begun to blur as Chrissie has suggested, I think it's crucial that we start to buy the entire history of single-channel film and video work. Again, if you look at really incredible collections like Kramlich's, those somehow tend to be divorced from film archives and film institutions. I think that it is up to us bringing

these histories together and activating them more because there is a lot of crossover with sculpture, with installation and a number of other media.

Chrissie Iles: Somebody like Bruce Conner being at Art Unlimited is great, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Bruce Conner is the Bruce Nauman of the experimental film world. But there are many, many, many more to discover. I guarantee not one of you would have been to the New Yorker Filmmakers Coop to see the films there. There is extraordinary work by hundreds of filmmakers which we could fill the entire Art Unlimited booth with just by projecting them all over the place. There are extraordinary things.

The film distribution model and the unique or edition model of the art world have very different strands economically or they have had traditionally. And bringing uneditioned films into the collection like, let's say Richard Serra's films that he has made uneditioned – they are no less unimportant art historically than something that costs 500,000 Dollars. Because money historically has no bearing on something's value. Otherwise you are going to say that Claes Oldenburg's performances were worth nothing at all.

Stuart, you sort of did address the market issue in a big way by bringing up those differences. And I think that bringing those histories together is very important. Particularly since young artists are looking at that material very closely themselves. And actually I think that galleries are often much quicker to respond to these kind of ideas than museums are. Because museums are traditionally much slower, they are about confirming things. Leo Castelli was showing Michael Snow films in the seventies. So was Paula Cooper with Yvonne Rainer films. This is actually a very interesting area and I think that galleries will continue to show because that's in a way what galleries do extremely well. The relationship between the museums, the collectors and the galleries is very important. However, there are also other film archive related situations and early video situations which are not accessible through the gallery system that

I think one must pay attention to. Speaking of paying attention; we are very mindful of the time. So I'd like to open it up to the audience right now. Do any of you have questions?

Audience: My question is about the originality of the work and selling the artwork. Is it the certificate which the gallery gives to you? Is it the DVA tape? What makes the artwork an original?

Chrissie Iles: Pip – do you want to answer that?

Pip Laurenson: Well. We are not going back to Benjamin and the notion of the original ... we're going to park that for a minute ...

I think on a really practical level there are different ways in which works can be bought and sold and they are all legal constructs. One is via a distributor and that is a very particular economic model with essentially different levels at which you can buy. For example, you can buy an archival tape or you can just buy the right to show that work for a short period of time. You have very limited rights in terms of what you can do and these are specified in a contract. You can't loan it for example because the distributors make their money through loaning it to other people. That money has to come back to the artist and the distributors for preservation.

And then there is the gallery model. And the history of this is very interesting because from very early in the late sixties and the early seventies we start to see the editioning of video works. That's where the certificates come in and the important thing there is that you know the number of the edition and also the number of artist's proofs. And the other way of course is to sell it as a unique work. All of these things are legal constructs as these works are endlessly reproducible. But it's the same for bronze, because we have the ability to produce a copy the market is actually controlled through legal constraints.

I think the other really important recognition actually is to say that some works just operate outside those systems altogether and they are unlimited. And it's really your choice to bring it into

your collection and preserve it without traditional market concerns about rarity.

So yes, if you are buying an editioned work or a unique work you should get a certificate which certifies that you have certain rights of ownership and you also need to make sure that you've got the ability to enact your rights in the future. So for example for a video work you need to make sure that you have a master tape that will enable you to make exhibition copies in the future. Or if you buy a film you need to make sure that you have an inter-positive or an inter-negative or both to ensure that you can make prints in the future. And you need to make sure that you have any installation instructions or any particular pieces of technology which are really essential for the work and that you understand what those essential ingredients are.

Chrissie Iles: Thank you Pip.

Christoph Blase: The problem is sometimes that we have for example with Ulrike Rosenbach: We have the same piece let's say in 5 minutes 30 seconds and we have another version in 6 minutes 18 seconds. She sold in the seventies and in the eighties different versions but it's all the time the same piece. So everybody thinks he has the original. But even she, even the artist, doesn't know what could be the original. You only have an original if you have a tape, let's say today a digi-beta tape with five copies of the same length, and you have number three and a certificate of your tape and that there exist only these five copies. Then you can be sure that you have a kind of original.

I found a very interesting model of how to sell a film here at the Art Unlimited yesterday: This is the Philip Parreno and Douglas Gordon piece "Zinedine Zidane". This piece, which is a film, was shown in Cannes one or two years ago and now there is a museum version. The museum version consists of the original – the original film – which was played in cinemas and so on. This is the one projection. And there is a projection beside with total footage of one of the seventeen cameras which was documenting this football match, in

order to make one film. So if you can be sure that you have the original footage from, let's say camera five or six or seven, then you have a real original I would say. That's the only work here at the Art Unlimited I find interesting to think about the question of the original and you see that the gallerist and the artist thought exactly about these problems. To sell a film, which is a film as an artwork in an art version. And that is one of the few examples where it's absolutely correct written what I get: You get DVDs and digital Beta copies. I think the thing is okay.

Pip Laurenson: I just want to let the people know about a project that was initiated by the New Art Trust. It's a collaborative project involving registrars, conservators, curators, technical experts and legal advisors from SFMoMA in San Francisco, MoMA in New York, Tate in the UK and the New Art Trust and it is called "Matters in Media Art" (<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/majorprojects/mediamatters/use.htm>).

What this project is trying to do is to answer some of these questions and to give you the tools to help you probe these issues when you are thinking of purchasing a time-based media work. The project aims to suggest some of the questions you need to ask and what sort of information you need to gather. You can access the website through Tate online, or through MoMA's and also SFMoMA's website.

Chrissie Iles: Before we get to the next question, I also want to say something about why bother to have a uneditioned film, a print of a distributed film in a permanent collection. Why would I bring a Stan Brakhage film into the Whitney's collection a film if it's not editioned? The answer is that unlike film archives where you may have a cinema and where you may see it at 7 o'clock in the evening and then it goes back into the film archive, and say that Stan Brakhage film could be only seen in relation to other films: Brakhage once said to me, "I have much more in common with painting than I do with my fellow film makers." So because its

at the Whitney as a film, we will install it alongside next to a room with paintings. This will allow the film to have a completely different reading.

If museums are about telling the story of art history and this aspect of art history since film as an art form is lost, because you only see it in the evening, at a certain time, or during the day at a certain time and not in a gallery situation, you really will lose a very important relationship between time-based work including film and uneditioned work and objects. I just want to say that because that is a question that people sometimes ask. Are there other questions or thoughts from the audience?

Audience: Can you please explain a little bit more about the conservation and the media of the conservation? You spoke before about the DVD as not ideal for conservation. So – if you can explain a little bit more about that? And the different possibilities?

Pip Laurenson: The issue about DVD is that it's a very heavily compressed format. It's MPEG-2, which means it's a lossy compression and you are throwing out lots of your information. And if your work is originated on video almost any format that the artist has shot it on would have been much higher quality than you get on DVD. I think what is so interesting now is that as new display mediums become available, as artists are streaming through MacMinis on higher bit rates and all the rest, we are beginning to see the artifacts that are in DVD. When DVD came out we thought, "Ah, this is fantastic – it is so much better than laser disk." But now we are moving on. As new higher quality formats become available a lot of the artifacts that are in DVD become visible that people were blind to before.

So the problem with DVD is that it's very heavily compressed. And in terms of your preservation format you want to get the best available master (which we are assuming is of a higher quality than MPEG-2) and migrate that through a transparent stream so that you don't lose additional data. On

the whole that means digitalizing it to an uncompressed form. You can either go to very high-end tape formats like D-5, which are totally uncompressed or you can use something called a lossless compression system like Digital Betacam, which is the choice of most galleries and collectors because it is very widely accessible and it is a fairly robust format. So that's the problem with DVD: You've already thrown out so much of your artist's original material and actually it's so heavily compressed that you go are going to see these problematic artifacts in your material.

Christoph Blase: Most artists today are working like commercial filmmakers in final cut and they have a final cut project with uncompressed data. So the best thing to get is the final cut project in the final stadium and to keep this with a backup. Then I think it is rather sure.

And what we are doing with the old videos: We are digitalizing them in uncompressed versions. But that means: One hour of video is around 80-90 gigabyte of storage so we have around 350 terabyte now on digital masters. This is a huge amount. But on the other side I think it's the only possibility to have a file, to have data we can even work with in ten years. And then we can compress it again and do everything with that. I think that's the most important thing: That you have uncompressed data. Acceptable because very practical is Digital Beta, but I think there are better versions.

Audience: What do you think about Flash-D?

Christoph Blase: Will it exist in five years? In ten years? I don't think so.

Chrissie Iles: Other questions?

Audience: What do you think about the technology in the US? They are using a NTSC, we are using PAL. We have this problem – we are doing exhibitions in Prague.

Christoph Blase: This problem, I think, is a little bit over. Because every digitalization is either on NTSC or PAL and every playout device, every monitor, every beamer is able to play NTSC and PAL. So a conversion, which was in former times necessary, we don't do anymore. We only have to choose one format for presentation DVDs if we have PAL material and NTSC material. Because a DVD is not able to present both. That's the only reason to convert anything from one system to the other. I think it was a big problem, but now it's a small problem.

Pip Laurenson: I would really say: Don't convert if you are preserving. Standards conversion creates all sorts of problems in terms of artifacts.

Christoph Blase: I also think: the 4:3 and the 16:9 – that's the horrible thing at the moment. We gave material with an interview with Joseph Beuys to the television. And of course it was 4:3. And what they did: They took the 16:9 and cut that!

Chrissie Iles: I would say that high definition video to me is an almost fascist kind of visual medium. It's too bright; it looks like a video game. The world doesn't look like that. And if you show something from maybe 1990 on a high definition video, you destroy it. If a video is made on high definition – fine. But I think that it looks far, far too bright and light and sharp and off the moment. It is really like putting a filter in front of a painting. Like asking someone to look at Rothko through some kind of blue filter if the Rothko is green or red.

I think it's that problematic and we have to be very careful. An Aspect Ratio is the same as a painting. It means height and width. Please do not put videos on flat screen televisions, which is a commercial format designed for you to watch Turner Classic Movies and Hollywood films. It's a large, wide format. That's not the format that artists make their videos in. This is a problem because of course the commercial industry doesn't care about artists and is not thinking about Art Basel

or a museum or artworks. It's thinking about you going to watch the latest Tom Cruise film at home which is all made on that format. So, you know, the number of people who watch the news and watch CNN with Hillary Clinton and Obama like this is incredible.

Actually I have to say in the art fair I have seen artist's videos also completely distorted and the meaning is like hanging a painting upside down. Don't be lazy! Either as galleries or curators. Not every curator has the sort of expertise that we have or has the kind of daily access to technical expertise that we have. So you must ask and think about these questions. Because high definition – I think – is a total nightmare in terms of video. As far as I am concerned, it's already difficult enough to persuade most curators to take on a film loop, which really isn't very difficult to do. But film is a completely different medium. It has a very soft quality and as curators and as galleries you have to be very precise.

The Jan Mot booth is extremely intelligent, I think. It has video, slide and two film loops in different sizes. That shows an absolute understanding of the position of the mediums and you can present quite a few works in a small place. And that I think is a real model for museums as well as galleries in terms of the differences – the subtle but important differences.

Do we have more questions?

Audience: I am involved in new media art of the interactive kind, interactive art or internet art. And my question to you is: Do you think it's too early for this discussion in the realm of interactive art and internet art? I find it very interesting how you are discussing also the danger of losing a lot of artwork made in the sixties and seventies. The interactive and the internet art are much younger but already we are losing a lot of information also in that field. So I'm interested in your opinion, your perspective in terms of conservation, in terms of access of the artwork to museum collections, from these even younger media.

Chrissie Iles: Stuart, do you want to respond to that?

Stuart Comer: It is absolutely urgent that we start addressing the so-called new media or net art – I mean there are a lot of different phrases and a lot of misperceptions already. And as you have already mentioned, the interactive component means that there are kinds of new media that have nothing to do with the internet, whereas there is also net art which of course has something to do with the internet on some level. But just as with video these things can become obsolete very quickly. And it's a matter what technologies are available to show them.

So just as with everything else we've been discussing, these are very recent histories that are already at risk of being lost, if we aren't able to present them properly. There are only a few really proper collections now, in-depth collections of so-called media or new media art or net art. Most major museums have begun to collect it in some capacity but not totally successfully yet.

Particular artists like Stephen Willats, who is a British artist that was heavily involved with the cybernetics movement and artists in general have become more concerned with ideas around participation and theater and social engagement – that is precisely what the internet is doing. It is changing how we experience social networks as well as artworks. I think it is crucial that we begin to position these artists as they deserve to be as key links between movements like minimalism and conceptualism, video, installation art, expanded cinema, new media – all these things are far more interrelated than we admit and than we present. So I think that so-called new media is a crucial part of this equation and we have to start to collect it and figuring out how to collect it right away.

Christoph Blase: May I? We have exactly this problem at the ZKM. I think we have the biggest collection of new media art in the world, starting in the late eighties. With all the installations, all the Silicon Graphics based machines and things. For

next year, when ZKM will be 20 years old, we are just starting in the moment a big reconstruction of our own collection. And we will get all the old works from the depots and we will do emulations of the Silicon Graphics program with modern computers. I think we found really the last possibility to reconstruct it because all the programmers are still there. The equipment is still there. We have never thrown anything away. I think now we can succeed to reconstruct certain works from '91, '92 and so on. In ten years, I think, it would be too late.

Chrissie Iles: Pam, you said, that when you began, you traveled all over the world to see pieces. Because you needed to see them in order to decide whether you wanted to buy them or not. And I do the same. We do the same. You have to see something properly, in an installation, in order to know if you want to buy it. Do you see that changing in the same way that people now are astonishingly buying paintings from JPEGs which I would never do, which I find extraordinary. Do you think that things have shifted in terms of time-based work as well? Do you see a shift occurring as it is occurring a painting? Or sculpture?

Pam Kramlich: Well, actually this year, I purchased two pieces without seeing them installed. You develop confidence in who you're working with, and you have to know the artist. Recently, it was the Tacita Dean piece shown at the DIA, and just yesterday I decided to buy a piece by a Japanese artist that is owned by the Cartier Foundation – that work I only saw on a computer screen. I would prefer not to buy that way, but sometimes there's no choice, and computer images get better all the time.

Chrissie Iles: Yes. Are there other questions?

Audience: Given the fact, that we are acknowledging all the problems involved with collecting media work from installation to conservation, and I know that Pam has an extraordinary collec-

tion and she has the facility to exhibit it and will have even better facilities, how do we encourage the so-called average collector to continue to be interested in new media art? From my own personal point of view I collect media art because I have a passion for the artists who are making it. And if they were making a painting or a sculpture I would do the same. But generally speaking: I've heard so many people say, "Oh, I can't collect media art because it's too difficult." How do we keep on encouraging people to collect media art?

Chrissie Iles: I think that's partly galleries' role working with the artists. And I think it depends on the collector. Not all time-based work requires a lot of amount of space. Some does, some doesn't. You can have a smallish room and show something extraordinary. You can show Broodthaers' slide pieces in a fairly small room. I saw "Bateau Tableau", Broodthaers' wonderful slide piece that Pam owns, in a relatively small room.

I think it's about telling collectors that it's not so scary technologically speaking, you just have to have access to a technician, but you have to have access to someone to hang your painting, too. Or to put up a complicated sculpture that needs assembling. You just should see technicians in the same way. And then you have to have a space that does work with small projections, or monitors for monitor-based work. Or if it requires more space a small room. So it depends. But you can install and de-install. If you have a small room you might want to show a light-based work one day, a video, or film or slide installation the next day, and two or three paintings the next day. It's certainly harder to have something in your New York apartment, just because of light or space reasons. But a lot of collectors do have quite large spaces. If you are buying a large installation or a large sculpture, you can also buy a video installation or a film installation.

Stuart Comer: I would also say: Don't be scared, be excited about the work. I think this conversation is the tip of the iceberg. And it needs to be

happening far more frequently and especially in contexts like this. There is still huge kind of ignorance and lack of information about this kind of work and I think as we begin to learn more about it the intimidation factor will decrease. Also the technologies that are developing are cheaper and easier to use.

This is still really an early period for this kind of work. We've been installing paintings and sculptures for centuries, so we kind of know what we expect. I think the more we familiarize ourselves the easier it will get. There will always be challenges but most good collectors are always willing to meet the challenges.

Pam Kramlich: Can I say that the “Bateau Tableau” that Chrissie was talking about is in our guest bedroom in our house. And it's there with some early Californian impressionist paintings. And it's wonderful. You can do it!

Audience: Hi. In regard of the last question about how to encourage galleries and the market: I think it's very interesting what you have been talking about how to collect the pieces – the original and the limited edition full quality content pieces defer from copies, distribution copies or telematic communication like internet. So, I do believe like in the regard of how to show the pieces, how to see the pieces, nowadays the internet is very interesting as the screen is the same medium. It is not like watching a JPEG, but it is actually the same medium as the work was supposed to be seen. So internet has a role on the market of private collectors and it does give a lot of audience to the works. I do believe it does encourage a market, a healthy market actually. I wonder what you think about it. About internet, telecommunication, artwork and video.

Chrissie Iles: Well, I think there are two things you are talking about. One is single screen works to collect and the other is spatial installations that take out 3D-space. And I think single-screen-works – it's very helpful to be able to see them on the

internet. With YouTube, with Ubu. Ubu have no right to put up those films and if someone asks them to take down the film they do. But while the film is up, and they have a wonderful group of films up there, it's an amazing research tool because otherwise those films which only exist on celluloid would be very much difficult to see.

So I think the internet can be a wonderful research tool. But it doesn't take the place of being able to understand how something operates in physical space. And I think as things become more portable, museums and collectors play a very important role in purchasing and displaying spatial installations – often quite complex spatial installations which are not just a projection on a screen, but actually deal with the physical space in various conceptual or formal ways. And it's that work, those spatial aspects, which must not be lost, because whether it's film and video, or even another sort of conceptual use of space. It's very fragile as people flatten space more and more.

Stuart Comer: There is a common logic that with the rise of digital space we are going to lose the physical space or the real presence. I think it's actually going to be the opposite. We will kind of yearn for physical space. Suddenly you're seeing that a lot of young artists like Tobias Putrih, a young Eastern European artist, they are designing their own cinemas and presenting films in there. And I think again, that the old school experience of the cinema cannot be beaten. That engagement of having an audience and the kind of conversations you have after. And going back again to the sixties and seventies you see that artists like Dan Graham and Vito Acconci because of light or space reasons were always designing cinemas or different architectural constructions for viewing films. The internet is still one of many, many, many options. Whereas the internet is also a hypersocial space and there are other ways to engage film in that way.

Chrissie Iles: I also think it's important to remember that there are installations, which are not just

about projections on a wall. For example Robert Morris' "Finch College Project" from 1969, where there was a gridded mirror and a gridded photograph of a cinema audience. And he filmed art handlers putting the mirror up, and the photograph, and then taking it down. Panel by panel. And the end result, which was the installation, was this film being projected, revolving around the room and all that was left on the walls of the images were these marks where the images had been. And this was Robert Morris in the sixties, trying to erase the image, and trying to reject the painting as some of the artists were. This is a very complex physical installation. Only one element of which was in that case a film loop. So, let's not just say "well, that's a sculpture" and then "this is a video". There is a lot in between. It is very complex and sometimes subtle. I think curators and gallerists really need to do proper research rather than just going with the obvious because there are many very different nuances.

Audience: I'm going to ask you from the artist's point of view – not from the collector's. But it's also about selling work. I've been working with interactive videos and breaking down boundaries between audience and artists in a conceptual way. But I was faced with the problem that we made these videos of installations and the exhibition and put them on YouTube before the opening. It was about playing with these concepts. And afterwards, these videos – you know, somebody wanted to buy them. And I and my collaborator we really didn't know what to do because here we made a work playing with that whole concept no one owning it. And sending it out to the whole world and making 259 copies. And then someone wants to buy it and we sort of got stuck there. What would you say about a situation like this?

Pip Laersonson: This is a good one. I think it's probably a job for a curator, to answer this, but the market is very adept at absorbing things that were never really supposed to enter the market in that way. But perhaps Stuart can say something more.

Stuart Comer: Two examples quickly: I mean even within the film or cinema festival circuit ... If you look to Brasil for instance there is a huge documentary market that only happens online. Like these things don't get even shown in cinemas. It's all being exchanged through filesharing online.

And then there are young artists in New York like Ryan Trecartin. He is releasing his videos on MySpace just as much as he is showing them in his gallery in Chelsea. Similarly the artist Sharon Haze made a video that is a remake of a documentary about the Patty Hearst abduction. She shows it in one of two ways: Either projected on a wall or as a stack of old VHS video tapes, which are obviously almost obsolete anyway. The video tapes are meant to circulate endlessly. So you are supposed to pass it on to the next person after you watched it. So again, you can't possibly edition something like that and it becomes a really interesting question if a museum wants to acquire something that's in open distribution and I don't think we've really come to grips with it yet. I hope that artists keep challenging us like this.

Chrissie Iles: Thank you, Stuart, Pam, Pip and Christoph. Thank you for coming!

Art Basel Conversations | Saturday, June 7, 2008 | 10–11.30h |
Hall 1, Messe Schweiz

TRANSCRIPT | **GALLERY AGENDAS**
WORKING FROM THE EDGE
OF THE GLOBAL MARKET

What are the challenges of running a gallery from a far corner of the (art) world? How does such a gallery remain connected with the international contemporary art scene, despite the distances involved and the need for maintaining interpersonal contacts? Or is it perhaps actually an advantage to work from an 'exotic' locale?

SPEAKERS | **ORLY BENZACAR**

Ruth Benzacar Galeria de Arte; Buenos Aires, Argentina

PI LI

Boers-Li Gallery; Beijing, China

JOHN MCCORMACK

Starkwhite Auckland; Auckland, New Zealand

GREGOR PODNAR

Galerija Gregor Podnar; Ljubljana, Slovenia/Berlin, Germany

Moderator | **PHILIP TINARI**

Director, Office for Discourse Engineering; Beijing, China

Introduction | **Philip Tinari**

Good morning everyone and welcome to this edition of Art Basel Conversations. My name is Philip Tinari. I am a critic and curator based in Beijing as well as Art Basel's China advisor. Today we have a really interesting panel of four gallerists from completely different parts of the world. Parts of the world that don't fit together very easily under a single label and much less under the label of the periphery, as the scope of the panel has been defined. We've Orly Benzacar from Buenos Aires, John McCormack from Auckland/New Zealand, Gregor Podnar from Ljubljana/Slovenia and Pi Li from Beijing in China.

I think that it is interesting at a moment like this one, where things become almost automatically global and international, to return to this question of the center and the periphery almost in a self-conscious kind of way, knowing that this is a debate, that has been had again and again over the nineties. But to speak now specifically about the gallery model, which is a historically specific thing, and to look at how galleries in places away from the art centers London, Paris, New York and Berlin have come to respond and adopt this model to their own local situations.

One interesting thing about the panel here is as well that with the exception of Orly, whose gallery has been around since 1965 and has been participating in Miami Beach from the very beginning, we are dealing with a panel of extremely young galleries. Pi Li's Boers-Li gallery has been around since 2005 and was in Miami last year but is for the first time in Basel. Gregor has his gallery since 2003 and it's his third time in Basel, though he participates in quite a number of international fairs this year. And John has founded a gallery in 2002, but is actually here at Basel at his first art fair ever, which is not the typical story, but a wonderful story and he is presenting a project in the Art Unlimited as well as in Art Statements.

The format is that we will hear from each of our panelists a kind of opening salvo talking about their position and their history in the business.

And then there is a number of questions that I think are interesting to talk about together. And then we open things up to the audience – for your own concerns and insights.

So, we'd like to hear from you.

Orly Benzacar: Okay. Good morning everybody. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am Orly Benzacar, the owner of Ruth Benzacar Galeria de Arte from Buenos Aires, Argentina. The gallery was founded by my mother, Ruth Benzacar over forty years ago and I took over after she passed away in the year 2000. Solana Molina Viamonte has been the director of the gallery for five years and we have been working together since then. The main goal of the gallery has been since it's foundation to devote to contemporary Argentine art and to promote it abroad. Having worked in this direction during the last twenty years, the gallery was participating in international art fairs in Europe, as well as in North and South America being convinced that this was the way to conquer new markets. At the end of 2001, Argentina underwent one of the most serious crisis', both political and economic, causing beside other things a tremendous devaluation of our currency. This happened practically at the same time as the new art fair in Miami was being born. At that very moment, I felt that I had to participate in Art Basel Miami Beach. Due to September 11th the fair was postponed to 2002. We were present at Art Basel Miami Beach with enormous economic effort, but very successfully. So our performance with good results encouraged us to apply to Art Basel. And that's why we are here.

The invitation to Art Basel Conversation to discuss "Working from the edge of the global market" produced in me a number of reflections, which I would like to share with you.

The edge of the global market involves in my opinion a big contradiction. In fact we work from an edge. But what is that edge? The edge is the access to the big market. Actually we are all in the same globe. We can't speak about edges in the sphere. They don't exist. That big market as we all know is in the Northern hemisphere – Europe and the United States. They are the ones with the big difficulties to see us and to be interested in knowing what happens in the peripheral countries.

Now I am going to refer particularly to my country, Argentina.

I am sure that our artistic production is of high quality; probably the best proof was that the Golden Lion was awarded by León Ferrari in the last Venice Biennial. And by the way, León Ferrari – you can see his works in my booth in the fair. This prize was also awarded by other Argentine artists such as Antonio Berni, Julio Le Parc and others. Younger artists such as Nicola Costantino, Jorge Macchi, Leandro Erlich, Fabiàn Marcaccio, Pablo Siquier and so on are often invited to the most important biennials, as well as to international shows. And their works are included in the collections of the most well-known museums of the world.

I would also like to mention that there are many problems not only in our country, but in the whole region, which hinder the possibility to conquer new markets: Our geographic position besides the lack of political and economic stability. Increasingly accumulated bureaucratic proceedings, that not only obstruct everything, but everything is much more expensive when we have to export works of art.

Unfortunately, we have neither private nor public sponsors. Our country does not have economic resources devoted to culture. And our enterprises are not used to support art because art is not tax deductible. Although this is changing very slowly. Obviously this is connected with the ups and downs of our economy. Believe it or not, we are our own sponsors and we feel strong enough to go ahead. I am aware of this reality. But I am convinced that I have to work hard, to be able to conquer new markets, to achieve positive feedback by using the history of the gallery, and the experience that I have been achieving during all these years, the enthusiasm that I possess, and last but not least the legacy, which I received from my mother. Thank you very much.

Philip Tinari: Thank you and good luck conquering new markets. It is an interesting metaphor which we can just come back to in a bit. Maybe first we hear from John McCormack, Starkwhite Gallery in Auckland.

John McCormack: Good morning everyone! One of the interesting things that popped up in the conversation we were having before we came to the stage, is the way we have come to being gallerists and how they inform the way we work in the global art market.

In my case, my background is ten years of working for the Arts Council of New Zealand, being director of the visual arts program. After that I had ten years of being the director of public art museums, which I greatly enjoyed especially at the smaller art museum I worked for. It had a small staff with just one curator so I was close to the curatorial work and I also worked closely with the artists who were part of our program. However as I progressed, moving on to larger art museums I got further and further away from the things that had drawn me to working in the visual arts in the first place. At the end, my job as a director seemed to have too much to do with dealing with government funding agencies, dealing with patronage and sponsorship, and very little to do with working with curators and artists.

In 1999 I came back to New Zealand, having been in Sydney for a short time at the MCA, and started a space with one of the people I worked with at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. It began as a creative space where we worked as creative consultants for a number of companies, also staging artists' projects and occasional exhibitions. But we found as time went on we were getting so much pleasure out of working with artists that it made perfect sense to start a fully-fledged gallery.

In 2002 we shifted gear after having found a new space in another part of Auckland, which is much bigger – we have about 9000 square feet of space with one large gallery downstairs, five small galleries upstairs and a stock and client room at the back. It allows us to carry forward some of the things we did as art museum directors – working directly with artists on projects and installations – but at the same time having enough space to run a more conventional dealer gallery as well. So it's a happy marriage of the things we used to do in

art museums in the public sector with the things dealer galleries do in the private sector.

Philip Tinari: Thank you. This institutional connection is one thing that is in common among the panelists here. And the commercial gallery as sort of a response to a certain feeling, or not feeling but frustration, within the official system. I think that is one thing we will come back to as well. But first maybe we will hear from Gregor.

Gregor Podnar: Good morning everybody. Actually, I have a similar background as John. I started in '96 in Slovenia. I was asked to run an art space, Škuc gallery. At that time I faced the situation of a very vivid art scene in a small city, but nevertheless we decided to go internationally due to the fact that it is a very small country and particularly a very small capital of 250,000 inhabitants.

During the years it turned out that on the public sector, it was quite difficult to proceed particular international standards and our ambitions were bit to different from that what we experienced. The cultural politics turned out to be quite conservative and I decided to go onto the art market. First within the art institution Škuc gallery 2002 at Liste here in Basel. Then, in 2003, I decided to go on my own.

Looking back now to the artists I worked with in the nineties: I worked with artists which are very known, Tacita Dean or Olafur Eliasson. But also with others – Yuri Leiderman and Vadim Fiškin for instance. They have been starting at the same time, but due to the fact that they lived and worked in smaller art centers without an art market this was a niche where we started to work institutionally: artists, who were established but not well presented on the art market in general. And then, one scope is particular the regional one. So it was not enough to focus on local artists, but there was for instance also a strong focus on conceptual movements of the sixties and seventies in Zagreb, the closest bigger city to Ljubljana.

In 2007, that means last year, we opened a gallery also in Berlin. Due to the fact that we would

like to show our local and also international visitors and collectors the gallery program, as well as the city is too small to invite or to bring people into the town. So this is also actually the move from the periphery to a much bigger city.

Philip Tinari: You mentioned that in fact that the Ljubljana space will be no more after a certain time ...

Gregor Podnar: No, we still will keep the space. We will turn it into a project room and since I am working with a few local collectors ... but of course it's a long way to enhance the art market in the future.

Philip Tinari: Pi Li, there is actually a Berlin connection with your gallery as well kind of in the beginnings. It would be interesting to hear your story – what was Universal Studios, how did it become Boers-Li?

Pi Li: I was curator since 1997 to 2005. That was a very critical time for the Chinese artworld. And at the end of the 1990s the contemporary art scene in China was kind of underground. It was not so often allowed to be shown to the public. But after 2000, it seems the whole economic situation changed. The government wanted to enter the WHO. The government wanted to show how much they respect the human rights and how much they respect art. And also because of the booming of the market the government started to include contemporary art in the official art program.

So there was for example the first show, "Living in Time" in 2001 in Hamburger Bahnhof, or in 2003 "Allôrs la Chine" at the Pompidou, and then we had the Chinese pavilion in Venice Biennial in 2005. So these kinds of major international contemporary art events were important for the contemporary art market in China. And as a curator, I was quite involved in curating these kinds of shows. Then in 2005 the market was dramatically booming, both in China and internationally. And the market prices were like three or four

times than just 12 months before. I think at that time the situation in Beijing was kind of the situation like it is in Berlin now. Every weekend there were new galleries opening in the 798 art zone. There were lots of galleries there. As curators we suddenly found that even though the market gets better and better and the government put so much money into the international arena, we still have no space to support the young artists. Because all the money flows to painting, to Cynical Realism, to Political Pop, the governmental money goes to the major cultural institutions overseas, to promote the new image of China.

So we decided to have a new non-profit space in Beijing together with Waling Boers, a curator from Berlin. He has run Büro Friedrich in Berlin for many years. So at the end of 2005, we tried to have a non-profit space to support the young artists to do some really interesting things. But in fact we don't have this kind of foundation infrastructure in China where you can apply for money. What we can do is to apply for some money at the British Council to show British artists, or we can apply for money at the Dutch Culture Foundation to show Dutch artists coming together with some Chinese artists. We found a space in this very old warehouse. It's about 1200 square meters. We called that "UniversalStudios-beijing".

But unfortunately after twelve months we couldn't get any more money from these foundations and we turned to private collectors to ask for sponsorship. But the boom of the market was so strong and all the collectors said, "Oh if we sponsor, can we get a work for that?" On that level we said, "Why we don't make a commercial gallery so that we have financial support?" And on another level the market in China is a mess. The artists are everywhere. Showing in tons of different galleries in Beijing. We don't have any kind of precise way to make a professional gallery. So then at the end of 2005, we started to be commercial. Unfortunately, in the meantime, we got a lawyer's letter from Hollywood. That we were prohibited to use the name "UniversalStudios-beijing", so we turned to the name "Boers-Li".

But return to the topic: as a curator, and now as a gallerist, running a commercial gallery is often more interesting for me. It's my space and I can finance things by myself. I can do what I want. For example, you probably have seen the train at Art Unlimited. It's like 45 tons and 24 meters long. That was a solo project of an artist from our space, his name is Qiu Anxiong. I was working as a curator for ten years and I was always sending the invoice to the different cultural foundations, but I know now that you can only realize this kind of crazy project by yourself. For me to be a commercial gallery, is not only about selling. In the meantime you can do a lot of things maybe you could not do as a curator.

Philip Tinari: I like this idea of the possibilities that exist in a commercial model to do the kinds of things that might have formally fallen into other sectors of the art world. Is that something that you John, as a former museum director have also experienced?

John McCormack: Yes it is and it is also one of the things we thought a lot about in relation to Art Basel – that if we were coming to present work from New Zealand in such great company, how would we go about doing it? The approach we settled on was to ask two of our artists to create installations of new work, more akin to the artists' projects we used to commission for public gallery programs. They are rich, complex projects that make demands on the viewer but this seemed to be a more productive way for us to address Art Basel where there is so much great art vying for attention. We backed our artists to come up with ideas and installations that would work in Art Statements and Art Unlimited.

Philip Tinari: It has been very artist driven then, your program.

John McCormack: Absolutely. That's one of the things that we like to do. We have an idea about what kind of gallery we want to run, but it is very

responsive to the interests and needs of the artists we represent.

Philip Tinari: One other question that came up in our discussion before was if there are different ways of working in the very basic gallery practice – the day-to-day things of running a space, of shipping, of dealing with collectors, of articulating a program. Are there ways of working that are specific to, say the Chinese context or the Eastern European context or the Latin American context that differ from those in what we call the international art world?

Pi Li: I think this is a very interesting question. I mean, coming from the Asian market to the global, China is really very far from here, from Europe. The “far away” is not only about the distance but sometimes also about ideas. In China the contemporary art market just appeared in the last ten years, or five years. And we don't have this kind of tradition or a precise way to make the art market.

At the end of the 1980s, the underground contemporary artists started to sell their work in the apartments of diplomats in Beijing. People were buying the work to give as gifts when they went back to Europe, to take to their hometowns for Christmas. And in the middle of the 1990s, especially after 1993, when the Chinese had their first show at the Venice Biennial, there were foreign gallerists and foreign dealers coming to China and beginning to sell Chinese contemporary art in Hong Kong, in London and so on. In the next ten years, from the 1990s to 2001, the main people who collect Chinese art are the foreign collectors. We didn't have many local collectors. And most of the Chinese artists had totally no idea about how the Western market works. They were working with multiple galleries, so nobody was taking the responsibility for those artists to make their money. So we can say that the contemporary gallery was introduced to China just after 2003. Then we started to build up this kind of exclusive scenes for artists, we start to build up this kind of connection with the artist.

Because we turned to the issue of the difference between being a curator and a gallerist: I think as a curator you are creating a show, you have the opening, the party, and then you leave the second day after the opening. But as a gallerist, you have to stay with the artist and with the show through the whole process. And you have to look at the reactions. On the other side there are so many practical things. You have to do the shipment, the insurance, you paint the walls. But on a more abstract level, it is very interesting that you start to build up the tightest link with the artist and with the people who are seeing the art, and who are buying the art. Most of the Chinese artists are really far away from the mainstream. They even don't know how to communicate with the international art world and on that level I think that our commercial gallery has a really important function. That's the most interesting part for us.

Philip Tinari: Gregor, have you felt distance in your work in the last couple of years?

Gregor Podnar: First of all, it's difficult to speak about the East European situation, because it is like referring to West Europe either it is London, or it's Porto or somewhere in the woods. First of all it is always the conditions which you find in particular countries. Particularly in Poland it's now happening that the infrastructure gets more and more improved.

I believe that in the East European countries the role of the state or the public sphere was very strong. Due to this fact in most of the countries of Eastern Europe, which of course I do not want to specify now because I am not an expert of each country, the art is stuck in its traditional institutional framework. And I believe that only private engagement, that means collections and private initiatives, can change this. If we see the international situation forty years ago you can see a similar situation appear in Switzerland. In the eighties for instance in Austria the situation improved internationally speaking due to the fact that a few institutional people turned to become galleries

and there was a certain pressure on the public sphere. So, a similar situation now appears in particular countries in Eastern Europe. And I believe that also this will happen very soon in Slovenia. In Poland, I believe, it's already on its way. Of course with all its positive and negative applications. Nevertheless provincialism as we spoke about before appears also in major cities. This is not only a situation which we face in peripheries.

Philip Tinari: Orly, we briefly spoke about the role that your gallery has for historical artists who have been working over the course of many years and some of the challenges of bringing artists who are very important in a specific local or national context to the big leagues of the so-called international art market. It would be interesting to hear about that.

Orly Benzacar: My situation is a special situation compared with my colleagues, because I represent a historical gallery in Argentina. And in our country there are many institutional problems. Our gallery was for many, many years the only contemporary art gallery in Argentina practically. We are not only working in the market – we are like a museum, a contemporary art museum in Buenos Aires. This situation is changing now and there are more galleries and more activities but at that time it was a very big responsibility.

Philip Tinari: Some of this historical artists that you represent who may not be known outside of Latin America – is the process of presenting them similar to present a young artist?

Orly Benzacar: Yes, definitely. Because I want to continue a contemporary art gallery and I need to introduce younger artists...

Philip Tinari: What I mean is – whether it is Gregor working with the conceptual movements from Zagreb in the sixties and seventies, or Pi Li returning a bit to the '85 moment in China – kind of going back to historical work. I think that this is

an interesting thing to talk about because it touches on how artists or figures who have been historically important in one place or another come now to a kind of global market a few decades later. And I think that all of your galleries are kind of playing a role in that. With Orly it is a very specific history of painting in Latin America and with a distinct market and a distinct critical community. But now that the things have kind of opened up, how do you think about that?

Orly Benzacar: My gallery doesn't work with very, very historical artists, the avant-garde artists from Argentina. I prefer to work with the primary market – with maybe old artists like León Ferrari, he is still alive. I prefer not to work with the secondary market. And I think the institutional role is very important to make known the historical artists from my country. I don't like to work with the secondary market only to make known our historical artists.

John McCormack: It is not a challenge that I have had to face as a gallerist. But if we got to this point I think I'd revisit an approach we successfully adopted with an exhibition of the work of our greatest artist, Colin McCahon, for the Biennale of Sydney. We had two curators involved – one from New Zealand working with the artistic director of the Biennale – and the process produced an exhibition that represented something significant about McCahon's practice, but that we were confident was going to strike a chord within the context of the Sidney Biennial. So if I found myself in that situation I think it's a process I would follow again – finding someone to help with the challenge of moving art out of a local context and into an international one.

Philip Tinari: Interesting. The other major theme we talked about, too, was the balance of collectors that you are dealing with, the market segmentation – I guess we are in lack of a better term. Collectors kind of from the region versus from the broader art world... I am just curious to hear from

you about how that affects the way that you run your gallery, how you conduct your business et cetera.

Pi Li: As a Chinese gallerist and curator in every seminar, in every discussion people are always asking you one single same question: "Do you think that the Chinese art market is a bubble now?" I always face this question. Somehow, sure, the art market is quite booming now and the price is high. After 2005 more Chinese people, Chinese collectors we call the new rich, started to collect. So the market is higher and higher and higher. So that's good.

But on the other side we suddenly found that the so-called historical works of Chinese artists are not collected by the important collections. I mean, the first collectors were just a few diplomats, some people that had a certain relation with China; they regarded their collection as a hobby. But go to Europe and you see in the major museums, in the major good private collections, that there are not so many places for Chinese contemporary art. That's the one issue.

But especially after 2005, the secondary market of Chinese art is very active. And at Sotheby's in New York, at Sotheby's Hong Kong or at Christie's you find so many contemporary art work sold to Chinese from Europe. I mean the work was going to Europe and now returns to China. And the so-called new rich, the new Chinese buyers, they have so much money to buy a work in Hong Kong, in New York, in London – these famous paintings of shaved heads and Tiananmen Square.

So that's the market situation we have to face in China. And as you might know, we are working with the young emerging artists. It is my hobby as well and I do believe that galleries should grow up with a certain generation of artists. And we do try to promote our artists not only to the international market but also the local market. But we want to guarantee a better future for the young artists. If we don't want to have a bubble in the market again, we should guarantee that our artists' works are in good collections; either good

private collections or good institutional collections. That's the first layer of this. On the other layer we do want a certain kind of international art market in China. So those are the several layers of this question.

So what we are doing now: We try to divide each sale to different places. We sometimes – if the artist really sells well internationally – reserve some works for the local market. If the artist sells very well locally, we reserve some work for the international collectors even if we can't sell them immediately. That's the way we have to do it. So I think as a gallery in China we try to do the double side. We try to keep some works in China for Chinese collectors, we try to build their taste. But on the other side we try to open up an opportunity for the future and we are seriously working on the international market. In Boers-Li Gallery in Beijing in the last 24 months 60 – 70% of the collectors were international, I think. But the 30% of the Chinese collectors they buy quite a lot, they do 50% or 40% of the sale of the gallery by volume.

Philip Tinari: Gregor, I wonder if your situation is in anyway similar. Or if not, what participation in art fairs specifically has meant to the way you have gone about building your program.

Gregor Podnar: At the beginning I had one, two collectors in Ljubljana in Slovenia. Now, after five, six years I have three collectors in the local context. So I was really very much depending on the international market, on being abroad and on art fairs in general.

I would also like to refer to the question you put before, regarding the historical, or let's say, art of the last 50 years. It's quite obvious that there is a lot of extremely interesting art of the last fifty years, for instance in Latin America. But that what conceives a museum collection in one of the centers of art production like London, New York and so on, is of course art which is backed by the gallery system. Also if you see for instance the conceptual movements, that what is in the museums is

partly also due to the fact of an important role of the market. And I believe that if I see the Latin American context for instance, if there is better support, or if the Latin American market is going internationally, very important historical positions will appear suddenly also in our more established museums in London, New York, Berlin et cetera.

Philip Tinari: Does anyone in the audience have a question?

Audience: You mentioned the Chinese art market and that occasionally the buyers have not a fair idea of the Chinese art market. I am curious to know about how you actually communicate your ideas to the buyers, what is your strategy?

Pi Li: Do you mean the local, the Chinese collectors or the international collectors?

Audience: I think the international collectors are 70% of the people who buy the Chinese art, right? So how do you actually communicate to that 70% of the collectors?

Pi Li: Communication with the 70% of the international collectors of the Chinese art is not so difficult. You know, because of the boom, since the 1990s first Chinese art, then Indian art and then Latin American art were quite hot internationally and there are many collectors coming to China to see and to buy – sometimes they are even buying without seeing. So far the international collector's part is not the difficult part. But we are quite selective. We don't want to sell the work to certain ... like you must know the Estella Collection – they sell to some dealer, to a fake collection, travel to museums, they jump to the auctions – that's what we don't want to do.

But on the other side it is very interesting how we communicate with the local collectors, which is not easy at all. People are buying a lot, but you know, most of the Chinese collectors they have no idea about what the difference is between buy-

ing the art and collecting the art. And we don't want to sell the work to a collector who keeps it in storage for ten years and then jumps to the auction. So on that level, as a gallery in Beijing it is a big job to communicate with the collectors. We bring the collectors here and we bring the Chinese collectors to meet the foreign collectors.

As for me the Chinese situation is very extreme in this panel discussion, because it is so hot now. I think for us it is more important that you communicate with the collectors than to sell work immediately. That is very important. Only if you do this you can guarantee a more professional career of the young artists. We have seen a lot of tragedies of the older generation artists.

Audience: Are there other ways of bringing your art to the global market? Maybe to bring the global market to your part of the world? And if so, how can you do it?

John McCormack: Auckland has an art fair that has the aspiration to bring the global market to New Zealand, but without a lot of success so far, possibly because it's the wrong type of fair. There are international art fairs that the art world travels to and there are regional art fairs that work locally. We've had two Auckland art fairs now and it's pretty clear that it won't ever be a major international fair. It seems content to work with mostly New Zealand and some Australian galleries. Whether it can grow into a more international fair is hard to predict. But I think instead of adopting models and assuming they will work in our situation, it's time to think about new ways of attracting the art world to New Zealand. And it may not be through yet another art fair. For example, we want to attract artists as well as curators and collectors and some of us are trying to pitch New Zealand as a production house – not just a place to freight art to for exhibitions, but a place where artists can come, live and work in residencies, making new work and exhibiting it, supported by publications. Having more great exhibitions of new work made in New Zealand by

international artists enriches our art scene and it might be a better way to attract curators and collectors than a minor regional art fair.

This is an example of a more productive way to start to thinking about the global and the international. I don't believe that New Zealand can set up an art fair that operates in a way that this one does. If we are to have an art fair we need to come up with a smarter New Zealand version than the one we have.

Audience: I come from India, we have a similar situation to China, where the art market has taken off in the last five years and it appears that most of the commercial activities are between the art fairs and the auctions, but there is a focus on some artists. But somehow, I feel a way of getting curators to go to work with artists, who are known and do collaborative projects will actually bring a focus to a new group of artists, which is something like what you were talking about.

Orly Benzacar: For me it is very difficult to explain this matter in English... But I think art fairs are a possibility to make a link that the market goes back because in this area all the people are similar. We are on the same floor with big galleries of the big market. I think this is the right model now. I don't know what will happen in the future.

Philip Tinari: I guess another interesting element is how the art fair comes to function for the gallery program and essentially how the gallery's public face is becoming less and less about the actual physical space, the actual location, but more about the way it chooses to present itself in these kinds of international arenas.

John McCormack: I think this is an issue for smaller galleries from our side of the world. Building an audience for contemporary art in New Zealand is an important part of our gallery program – one we don't want to abandon in order to pursue international art fairs. We have to find a balance between our role as a gallery working with a local

audience and art market in Auckland and a gallery that also wants to work internationally.

Philip Tinari: Do you feel that as someone who participates in five or six fairs a year, Gregor?

Gregor Podnar: Definitely. Art fairs, the structure of art fairs are very important, too, nowadays. But on the other side, taken the situation that the art market also produces a lot of unnecessary things, we have always to think also about alternative models, either in the periphery or in the center. And it is about your individual approach. Also how you see certain power structures and how to enhance particular issues or quality standards, which might not only be focused to the art fairs. But this is definitely right now one of the strongest models of representation.

Philip Tinari: Well, we are at the end of our hour. I wonder if anyone has a closing statement to make ... I think we have talked about a number of different challenges that people are facing and the ways of altering a certain kind of model to do new things and create new possibilities. In the moment we have kind of platforms like this one, where we can be together and make new things happen.

So thank you all very much for coming this morning. It has been a nice conversation.